A PRIMER OF HOMILETICS

BY

JOHN EDWARDS

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LEONARD G. BRIDGEMAN

A
PRIMER OF HOMILETICS

FIRST EDITION . . *March* 1908
SECOND EDITION . . *June* 1913
THIRD EDITION . . *October* 1923
FOURTH EDITION . . *October* 1932

Made and Printed in Great Britain by THE MAGNET PRESS,
188 Rye Lane, Peckham, S.E.15.

Preface

IN preparing this little volume the author has endeavoured to keep in mind the special needs of those who feel called to exercise the ministry of preaching the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, but have had no opportunities of definitely preparing themselves for the task. He does not imagine that he has solved all the difficulties of which beginners are conscious, or that he has been able to give them 'a MODEL handbook'; but having been in correspondence with hundreds of young men in the classes of the *Union for Biblical and Homiletic Study*, he thinks that he may claim to know something of those difficulties, and to have fitted himself in some degree for dealing with them.

It may, perhaps, be urged that such a book is unnecessary, and that from the numerous and excellent treatises already published on 'Preaching' the beginner may be trusted to choose what he needs. In reply to this, the writer is of opinion that no one of the volumes referred to is sufficiently simple and comprehensive for the purpose,

even if the beginner had the requisite knowledge, and also the opportunity, for consulting such a vast library. He has, therefore, ventured to add this small item to the existing manuals ; and hopes that it will serve to introduce many of his younger brethren to a richer and more fruitful conception of the greatness of their task.

The preacher's vocation is the highest to which any man can aspire, and gives the largest and most effective field for fruitful service. But the man must be a PREACHER ; and it is the object of the following pages to stimulate the young aspirant to pulpit work to such study and labour as is needed to make him worthy of his calling, and effective in the service of his great Master. To achieve such a result he must follow the apostolic counsel, 'Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth' ; and must ever keep in mind the injunction of Jesus, 'Apart from Me ye can do nothing.'

If the issue of these pages contributes to a better understanding of pulpit method, and the greater efficiency and joy of those commencing the preacher's task, the writer will be amply repaid.

J. E.

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I

THE PURPOSE OF PREACHING

To make a sermon that pleases a great crowd, that is admired, imitated, bruited about,—that is of little account in itself. But a sermon that really edifies, really interests the heart and penetrates it with its warming power, while it illuminates the understanding; a sermon that leaves a lively searching sting behind it, that follows the hearer, and in the hours of temptation, long after the sound of it has died away, comes up, as it were, dancing through the heart; a sermon that does not please, that stirs all the flesh in revolt against it, and yet pleases, that cannot be kept out of the mind, nor refuted, openly found fault with perhaps, but cannot be otherwise than approved by the heart,—*that* is the work of wisdom, the Spirit and the power of Christ.

LAVATER, *quoted by* BRASTOW

I

The Purpose of Preaching

IN commencing the study of this great subject, our first task—a highly important one—is to gain true and adequate ideas concerning the preacher's purpose and mission; and to determine, as far as possible, his place and power as a servant and representative of Jesus Christ. Unless this is done, and the character and object of his mission is clearly defined and accepted, a man may become a clever speaker, a brilliant orator, may even become popular and win much admiration for his pulpit utterances; but he is not likely either to possess the joy or achieve the success which follows all faithful and true work for God.

Preaching is the method appointed by God for bringing the knowledge of His salvation, as it is offered through Jesus Christ in the gospel, to the hearts of men. His great purpose in calling and qualifying men for this work is clearly set forth in the terms of the commission which Paul received

from Christ—Acts xxvi. 17, 18—'Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in Me.'

Several words are used in the New Testament to express the preacher's relation to God and to the people; and each of these throws some light upon his great task.

1. He is a witness—testifying to others that which he has seen, heard, and experienced concerning God's love to man.

2. He is a herald—proclaiming publicly and with trumpet voice the commands and messages of his Sovereign Lord.

3. He is an ambassador—bringing to sinful and rebellious men the offer of forgiveness, and showing how they can be restored to the favour and companionship of their King.

The first thing required of the preacher is, therefore, such a real and vital experience of God's saving grace in Jesus Christ as shall enable him to speak concerning it with confidence, and by his life and conduct be a living witness to its power: 'That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you

also, that ye also may have fellowship with us' (1 John i. 3). Conduct depends on character, action—doing—grows out of being, what a man *does* is the expression of what he *is*; and to be effective, the preacher must speak from the fullness of his experience of the life of God in his soul. Ignorance of the great and fundamental facts of experimental religion is a fatal bar to the ministry of witness and reconciliation.

To appreciate the full significance of this it is only necessary to turn our thoughts for a moment or two to the position occupied by one who lacks this essential qualification. He would be a witness, but has no story to tell, has seen no vision of gladness and hope to make known to others. The 'grace of God bringing salvation which hath appeared unto all men' has for him no real existence; its light and comfort have never dawned on his soul. What is the value of such testimony as he can give? He claims to be a herald, but is a rebel who has never heard the gracious message of his King, and does not even rightly understand the herald's duty. He poses as an ambassador, but has received no commission, is entrusted with no authority, and has never himself listened to the charge and claim of the Supreme Ruler whose representative he claims to be. What can he hope to accomplish?

Surely reality is demanded here. The *preacher* must be convinced of the genuineness and realize the value of his message, or he cannot hope to carry conviction to his hearers, or make them recognize in him a 'man sent from God.'

When we thus consider the greatness and intense importance of the preacher's task, we can easily see that it is not a calling into which a man can push himself, or which he can undertake without the most serious and careful preparation. He is God's witness, God's herald, God's ambassador; and to act efficiently in either capacity he must be fully and rightly equipped. His duty, when rightly understood, is the most tremendous which a man can undertake. 'Preaching, when reduced to its simplest form, is lifting up the cross, that sinful men may look and live.'[1] 'The end of preaching is to secure man's salvation.' The true preacher is *in the place of Christ*—'We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: we beseech *you* on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God' (2 Cor. v. 20).

The great end of all preaching is the salvation of the soul. The preacher's most sacred duty is to seek to arouse the conscience, to wake in the soul a sense of responsibility to God, to convict

[1] Kern.

his audience of their sin and need of help; and then so to arouse and stimulate the will that they are led to repentance and persuaded to come to Christ and accept His salvation. To the believer the preacher must so exhibit and expound the duties and responsibilities of the gospel that, under the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit, a Christ-like character may be produced as the fruitage of the new life.

This, and nothing less than this, is the real task of the preacher. 'Sermons,' as Beecher wisely said, 'are mere tools.' The preacher's function is not merely to make sermons, but to move men to right action; not to be a successful orator, but to produce religious convictions in his hearers; not even—if that were possible—to proclaim new truth, but to announce, interpret, and enforce the 'glorious gospel of the blessed God.' His aim must ever be to produce immediate and abiding results. And this is the estimate which all great preachers have ever formed of their duty.

'Preaching,' says Beecher, 'is the art of moving men from a lower to a higher life. It is the art of inspiring them toward a nobler manhood.' 'It is your duty to spiritualize and inspire the great forces of society, to impart spiritual tendencies, to give men a higher conception of what life means. . . .

If you want to become a preacher to your fellows, you must become a *fisher of men*—your business is to catch them.'[1]

'The divine aim of preaching is no other than a *saving* aim, to make known to the world the way of salvation; bringing salvation near to all nations for a witness unto them (Matt. xxiv. 14), with a view to God's vindication; to invite into the kingdom of God which has come nigh in Christ, or to keep and confirm in it. In the case of some, preaching aims at *awakening*, with a view to change of mind and conversion; in the case of others, at *building-up* in the faith, spiritual advancement.'[2]

The opinion of Dr. John Ker may be added. 'To be a true minister is to stand between God and man, and to bring them together. To do this we must ourselves be drawing ever nearer to God—in advance of the people. The one great Minister is the nearest. "He that is in the midst of the throne leads them." "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men," so He says.'

To this task the preacher must be willing to give the full strength of all his powers. The greatest work ever committed to man calls for the exercise of all his capacity, energy, and intellectual power.

[1] *Lectures on Preaching.*
[2] Christlieb's *Homiletics.*

'I reckon upon this as a great truth, that there can be no endowment in the soul of a man which God Himself is the cause and giver of, but may, even in its highest and choicest operations, be sanctified and employed in the work of the ministry.'[1] 'The young preacher should settle it in his mind that by severe as well as generous scholarship, by a life-long systematic study of the Bible, by the consecration of his powers to this holy work, by humble waiting upon God for light, he is to make himself a true interpreter.'[2]

The ministry is not a calling in which success can be achieved without effort or painstaking labour. The preacher is called to be 'meet for the Master's use, prepared unto every good work' (2 Tim. ii. 21). He ought so to prepare himself that his whole life may be a mighty witness to the truth he proclaims. Milton's statement concerning the poet is true also of the preacher. 'Whoever would not be frustrate of his desire to write well in poetry, must be a poet in life. Other things being equal, that will be the greatest and most effective verse, the soul of whose author is set on fire by the sentiment which it expresses.' The man who speaks his own word, or a word of God which has found no echo and is no

[1] Dr. South.
[2] Hoppin's *Homiletics*.

power in his own heart, is a man whose little ministry soon runs out. The man whose business it is to produce strong convictions in his hearers must be a man who has felt the power of the word himself. Let the young preacher, then, set himself seriously to consider the greatness of his task, and carefully to prepare for his life-work. The task is great; but He who sets the task is not only the Inspirer, but also the Strength of the worker. To the chosen ambassador of God, all the sources of the old prophetic fire are open, and he can draw his strength from that mighty Saviour 'in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.' And he must ever bear in mind that to lose the sense of the divine presence, and his clear perception of the divine message, is to become an ordinary man, to be an earthen vessel lacking the treasure which alone imparts to it any value.

II

THE PREACHER'S CALL

How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent?—ST. PAUL.

As Christ Himself appealed to His being sent from the Father, and the prophets and apostles appealed to their immediate divine commission as divine authority in face of the world, so to-day no one should enter the preacher's office unless he is sent, and knows himself to be an ambassador of Christ.—CHRISTLIEB.

II

The Preacher's Call

IF the statements made in the previous chapter are correct, then it follows that every preacher must be directly commissioned by Christ, must receive from Christ Himself a call to undertake the work of proclaiming the gospel. This is necessary both for his comfort and for his authority. For his comfort: how can he sustain the great responsibilities and fulfil the great demands of the ministerial or preaching office, unless he feels absolutely certain that the divine assistance is promised to him, and that in his weakness he may claim the help of the divine grace? For his authority: how can he speak with certainty as God's ambassador unless he has received the divine commission? An ambassador, by the very nature of his office, must be specially chosen and duly accredited; must have full knowledge of his Lord's will respecting the work he is called to do, or he cannot really act on his behalf. The preacher, whether he be regarded as steward, watchman, messenger, or ambassador, must be divinely com-

missioned, or he will lack the certainty and power which grow out of properly-authorized service. It is not our purpose here to speak of the *call to the ministry* as distinct from the *call to preach.* That there is such a distinction may, I think, be maintained on the authority of Scripture, as it is certainly revealed by the teaching of experience. But many of those into whose hands these pages will fall have not been called to the 'full work of the ministry,' although they are quite sure that they are called to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Now, as in the days of the Apostles, 'there are diversities of gifts' (1 Cor. xii. 4, 28, 29; Eph. iv. 11); but all are from 'one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally even as He will.'

We shall all agree that as the risen Christ directs, governs, shepherds, rules the Church Himself, so He alone has the right and authority to select and send forth His ministers and servants. One of the primary and essential qualifications of a preacher of the word is that he has received the divine call. (See Rom. x. 14, 15; 2 Cor. v. 18; Eph. iv. 7, 8, 11.) The difficulty is to find a short, clear, terse phrase to indicate what this 'call' really is. But an attempt to do so must be made.

The divine call, in its inception and earliest manifestation, is generally an inward impression

that God is putting this particular work as a burden on the heart of him who is the subject of the call, and giving him an all-absorbing desire to be engaged in that work. Such a *call* does not spring from a man's own desires or suggestions, but frequently comes in direct antagonism to his plans and purposes, and abides with him with a persistence which is painful in its intensity. The spirit becomes burdened with its message, and is ready to cry out, 'Woe is me, if I preach not the gospel.' As Mr. H. Elvet Lewis says, 'To have an interview with God is to undertake responsibilities.' The bearer of such a burden is usually gifted with teaching power, and with those qualifications which alone can fit him for public work. He is also brought face to face with suitable opportunities for exercising his powers, and showing to those qualified to judge his fitness for the task. The Church is usually quick to note those indications in character and capacity which mark the successful evangelist and preacher, and its call follows and confirms the impression which has been made by the inward call. To be further sure that his impressions have been really created by his divine Master, the subject of them should test himself by asking certain searching and pertinent questions. Perhaps no better tests can be framed than those which Methodists propose concerning those who

offer themselves for the ministry, viz. 'Has he grace? Has he gifts? Has he fruit?'

(*a*) Grace. The call presupposes regenerating grace, and a life and character fully consistent with the profession of Christianity. Let no one suppose that he is called to the teaching office of the Church, unless he is prepared to live, and is actually living, 'a godly, righteous, and sober life.' He is to be 'an ensample to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity.' And it is impossible for him to bear witness to others of the grace of God unless he knows its power in his own experience. No sight is sadder than to see in the speaker for God a 'graceless' preacher.

(*b*) Gifts. Has he gifts which qualify him for this particular service? Has he the mental powers and capacities which are requisite for this great task? and is he diligent in their cultivation and improvement? Is he able to speak so that people can and will listen to him? Has he the necessary health and physical vigour to enable him to stand the strain of pulpit effort? Will he surrender himself to the work, and give up everything that is likely to hinder his success in the pulpit? Does he possess those special gifts for winning and holding the attention, for moving and persuading men, which are necessary to success in preaching?

Unless he can answer these questions fairly and satisfactorily, a man may well doubt whether God is calling him to this particular service. The pulpit does not want men who easily tire of the work, or who are unwilling to take the requisite pains to qualify themselves for an effective discharge of the preacher's duty. John Wesley, who well knew the needs of the pulpit, wrote to one of his preachers: 'Your talent for preaching is not growing; it is quite the same as it was seven years ago, because you do not keep up your studies. It is lively, but not deep; without variety, without a more expanded range of thought. Without daily study, meditation, &c., you can never be a deep preacher. He who does not daily study and pray remains a shallow preacher.' Unless the beginner is prepared to make a strong effort to do these things, let him not deceive himself with the idea that he is 'called of God.' But when satisfactory answers can be given to these questions, and his capacity for the work has been tested by the use of fitting and frequent opportunities of proclaiming the truth, he may then face the remaining question respecting fruit to his labours.

(*c*) Fruit. Has he seen fruit to his labours? Are his efforts owned and blessed by God to the conviction and conversion of sinners, and to the building up of believers in the faith? Does he expect and

see conversions under his preaching? Here the answer must be clear and explicit. The word and promise of Christ to His apostles was explicit: 'Come ye after Me, and I will make you to become fishers of men' (Mark i. 17). 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved' (xvi. 15, 16). 'Unto whom I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God' (Acts xxvi. 17, 18).

To sum up—the call consists, first, in the impression made by the Spirit of God on a man's own spirit that he is specially called to this great work. Secondly, that inner call is ratified and endorsed by the voice of the Church, speaking through its authorized and accredited agents, and appealing for *your* service. Thirdly, it is evidenced by the witness of your own conscience, your godly life, the natural gifts and capacities with which you are endowed, and the fruits which follow your labours. Or, to put it more concisely, the marks are these: (1) The inward witness of the Spirit's call. (2) The Church's approval and ratification. (3) The attestation of God as seen in results. Where these three combine there is no place for doubt.

III

THE PREACHER'S MESSAGE

In order to a fruitful ministry, both the minister and the people should have this feeling—he, that what he is to speak is from God; and they, that what they are going to hear is from God. He cannot attain this without two things—a very constant and close fellowship with God, and a very constant and wide study of His Word. To be well balanced, to avoid the exaggeration not uncommon in preaching, one must have a wide knowledge of the general scope of God's Word; but if anything will influence a man to make sure that he is speaking the word of God to his people, it will be the feeling that they come expecting and anxious to hear from him the word of God.

DR. A. B. DAVIDSON.

Preaching, if it is of the right kind, is the voice of God. This we venture to say while well aware of its imperfections. In the best of preaching there is a large human element beset with infirmity; yet in all genuine preaching there is conveyed a message from Heaven. And, while it is good for people to go to church that they may speak to God, it is still better to go that He may speak to them.

DR. STALKER.

III

The Preacher's Message

TWO things have to be distinguished in considering this phase of the preacher's task: (1) The source of his message; (2) his recognition of the particular truth needing to be proclaimed whenever he speaks for God. In other words, he needs to know where to find his message, and how to recognize it.

1. *Where shall the preacher find his message?* That the preacher must have a distinct message is a truism that hardly calls for utterance, yet, in view of some developments in the modern pulpit, must still be insisted on. Politics, art, literature, some of the more attractive elements of the socialistic creed—these are all at various times used as the inspiration or substance of the preacher's theme. But we think they are so used by mistake. We do not deny their value; we do not deny indeed the urgent need of some clear and forceful exposition of the last-mentioned topic particularly being brought

into prominence by capable speakers: but we do not think that the pulpit—the place consecrated specially to the proclamation of God's evangel—is the fitting place for this much-needed task. Dr. Peabody, in his volume on *Jesus Christ and the Social Question*, points us to the example of Jesus:

'He is asked to deal with the special problem of inheritance, and His answer opens the larger question of the love of money: "Take heed, and keep yourselves from covetousness." In short, Jesus will not be diverted by the demand for a social teaching from the special message of spiritual renewal which He is called to bring. In many of the processes of applied science there are certain results known as by-products, which are thrown off or precipitated on the way to the special result desired. It may happen that these by-products are of the utmost value; but none the less they are obtained by the way. Such a by-product is the social teaching of Jesus. It was not the end towards which His mission was directed; it came about as He fulfilled that mission. To reconstruct the Gospels so as to make them primarily a programme of social reform is to mistake the by-product for the end specifically sought, and, in the desire to find a place for Jesus within the modern age, to forfeit that which gives Him His place in all ages.'

That some preachers hold different views on this subject is notorious. One is sometimes surprised at the evidence afforded by the advertising columns of the newspapers of the varied opinions which are held respecting the source of the preacher's inspiration and the origin of his message. There are preachers whose topics are frequently suggested by the most sensational occurrence reported in the daily press. Others seek inspiration in the most recent biography, the popular novel, the most attractive drama, or some curious phrase which has caught the momentary attention of the crowd, and make this the starting-point of the Sunday's discourse As Dr. Garvie puts it in his recent lectures: 'There is a *topical preaching*, in which subjects of ephemeral interest, remote from the essential verities of the gospel, are presented in a popular form to attract, not to say amuse, the crowd ; but that is still less work fit and worthy for the Christian witness.' The advertising columns in any Saturday's issue of some provincial journals will furnish evidence of this fact, and reveal the varied literary and social topics which have furnished the starting-point, if not the materials, for the next day's utterances. It would be possible from these announcements to procure sufficient evidence to justify a scathing article on 'The Degeneration of the Modern Pulpit.'

The Preacher's Message

No one who carefully considers the names which in the New Testament are given to the preacher and the preacher's work can have any doubt as to the real sources of his message if he is really desirous of fulfilling his duty. His mission is to 'preach the word'; to 'hold forth the word of life'; to cry 'Behold the Lamb of God'; to urge and beseech men living in sin and indifference to 'be reconciled to God.' He must follow the example of those in the apostolic age who 'went everywhere preaching the word,' and concerning whom it could be said, 'These are the men . . . who show unto us the way of salvation.'

To the Bible then, to the Word of God, the preacher must go for his message. 'The gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God' is the good tidings which he is commissioned to proclaim to a needy and ignorant world. And his first, and greatest, and constant business it is to make that gospel fully known. In order to do this, he must read and study the word of God as it is contained in the Bible, and must discover also the condition and needs of the congregation to which he is called to minister. This means not simply that he must read the Bible so as to gain a more or less general acquaintance with its contents, but that he must become familiar with its great truths, and acquire a special and

intimate knowledge of the mind and will of God as it is there revealed. He must so study it as to be able to expound and enforce its laws, its principles, and its revelation, with intelligence and power. It is there, and only there, that he will find a message suitable and sufficient to meet the spiritual maladies of the world. And this message must be known before it can be applied.

The preacher's knowledge of the Bible should be at once extensive and intensive; general and particular. He ought to know something about its general teaching, the scope and variety of its contents, the order of its progressive revelation from the earlier to the later books. At the same time it should be his aim, by a definite and detailed study of every part, to know the real meaning and object of each writer, the special message of each separate book and of every terse and pregnant passage.

Ignorance of the Bible should bar the door of the pulpit against any man. Any one claiming a place as a teacher in the Church should be ashamed to be ignorant concerning the contents of the Bible. How can a man 'preach the word' when he does not know the book in which the glorious message is enshrined? How can he bring the truth fitted to meet the difficulties and needs of burdened men and women to-day, if he has never taken the trouble to learn

God's methods of dealing with the men of earlier ages? Nothing brands a preacher as incompetent so certainly as for his hearers to discover that the Bible is to him 'unexplored country.'

For the purposes of preaching, some parts of the Bible stand out more prominently than others, and to these he will give his closest attention and most careful study. The Four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles, the Psalms, the Books of the Prophets, the Wisdom-Literature of the Old Testament, the Great Biographies, and the History of Israel, will all demand, and all deserve, the most earnest study and the most careful interpretation. The style of the various writers, the subjects on which they most lovingly linger, and the very words they use, must all come under the most severe scrutiny, and be made to yield their hidden and abundant fruit. Not until he has caught something of the spirit of the Bible, has recognized clearly the progressive revelation of God's will from age to age, has apprehended the freshness, reality, and wealth of the teaching of Christ, and its exposition by the later writers of the New Testament, can the preacher claim to be in possession of his message; and even then he will frequently find that he has only explored its surface, and that new treasures are ever revealing themselves to his patient and earnest gaze.

2. *How shall he recognize the message?* How, from the broad expanse of truth, shall he select the pertinent and suitable message for the moment? How, from the fullness and abundance of the truth, shall he choose that good and wholesome word which will meet the immediate needs and satisfy the yearnings and aspirations of the devout souls in his congregation? This is absolutely necessary if his preaching is to be effective; and it can only be done by studying the needs of the people, their special circumstances, their spiritual condition and recent experience; and by earnest prayer and meditation. The preacher who can rightly and aptly select 'the lesson for the day' will be hailed with delight by many a burdened and weary-hearted worshipper. The power to do this will not come suddenly. It must be sought for; and if sought for prayerfully and persistently, it will be found. Here, too, it will be true that 'the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity.' Sometimes the truth the preacher needs will flash itself before him as he studies the sacred page; sometimes it will illuminate his soul while in communion with his Saviour, or it will come to him as he moves in and out among the people, and learns their hopes and aspirations, their perplexities and temptations, their joys and sorrows. Or it may, occasionally, at least, come to him, with all the force

of inspiration, when he is face to face with his congregation, and with such a peremptory note that he is bound to speak that which he has felt and seen.

If he is to bring his message close home to the needs of those to whom he speaks, he must study those elements of life and character which are common to all men. The whole realm of human life lies open before him, and he must be at home with the deeper thoughts of mankind if he is to be successful in his attempts to move his fellows. 'Not a heart but has its romance, not a life which does not hide a secret which is either its spear or its sphere. Everywhere grief, hope, comedy, tragedy; even under the petrifactions of old age, as in the twisted forms of fossils, we may discover the agitations and tortures of youth. This thought is the magic wand of poets and preachers.'[1]

The secret of helpful preaching lies in this knowledge—this power to discover and recognize the appropriate word. And the secret is revealed when the preacher can intuitively fix on the message for to-day; when out of the rich treasures of Holy Writ he is able to select that peculiar element which shall touch the hidden chords of the heart, and make them respond to the music of God's message.

[1] Amiel.

IV

PREPARATION FOR THE PULPIT

An Indian sage has said that 'the best preacher is the man who has attained a true liberation of soul.'

To attain originality, men annex foreign languages and literatures, and do all sorts of odd things in the frantic endeavour to find something new. They forget that the only true and healthy originality is that which comes from the healthy growth of their own soul. If we want our 'old things' to become 'new' the method is to see them from the variant standpoint of an ever-deepening life. And this deepening will come by practice, by action, more even than by study. . . . The teacher becomes inexhaustible by putting himself thus in right relation in his inner world.—J. BRIERLEY.

There are two very different methods of preparing for preaching. One is the special or cramming process, going to work after getting the text or subject to gather sufficient materials from different sources,—the Bible, commentaries, sermons, homiletic handbooks,—to make the article of the required length. I use the right word, 'make,' for such a sermon is bound to be a manufacture put together from the time, and not in the nobler sense a message, coming out of the very life of the soul.

The other method is one of systematic and general culture, making oneself increasingly familiar with the great subjects that belong to religion and its expression, and then the particular sermon will be the special selection and expression of the thoughts and convictions already yours. It will be a word of *life*. I need hardly say which is the more real preaching.—DR. HOYT.

IV

Preparation for the Pulpit

IF it were possible to get a fairly accurate record of the methods employed in manufacturing, or providing, the sermons preached on any given Sunday, it would prove very instructive and probably most entertaining reading. The methods adopted by the famous preachers of the day would, if fully described, furnish us with admirable examples; while the story which would have to be told of those who purloin, or borrow, or buy the sermons of other men, would provide ample material for serious, and perhaps sarcastic, thought respecting plagiarism and the ethics of the pulpit.

This statement will not appear unfounded to any one acquainted with the advertising columns of certain newspapers. Promises are made to supply to any applicant a 'single sermon for any Sunday' for one shilling! Other writers cater specially for particular occasions and services; while if you wish for a 'sermon' manufactured *to order*, it will be supplied for the modest fee of 10*s.* 6*d.*

Leaving these and other illegitimate methods of providing sermons to those who are weak enough to need them, I wish specially to emphasize the absolute and imperative necessity for careful, adequate, and continuous preparation in everything that pertains to the preacher's task. This may seem so obvious that no reference need be made to it. But both observation and experience show that it cannot be taken for granted; that it requires not only to be pointed out, but to be strongly insisted on. There are persons who seem to regard the preacher's office and duty as a comparatively light one, and think that the greater part of his work is accomplished when he has acquired a firm trust in God. We are all familiar with the counsel, 'Go on and look to God for help'; with the misapplication of the great promise made by Christ to His apostles—'And when they bring you before the synagogues, and the rulers, and the authorities, be not anxious how or what ye shall answer, or what ye shall say; for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in that very hour what ye ought to say'—which is sometimes quoted by the preacher's critics and counsellors as if it was meant to put a premium on laziness, and encourage slovenly and slip-shod work, though, as every careful reader knows, it has no reference at all to the ordinary preacher. Its counsel and comfort is for the man—

preacher or saint—who is summoned before the tribunal of his country, and persecuted for his confession of Christ. When the preacher finds himself in that position, he may claim with confidence the fulfilment of the promise.

Others assume that public speaking, especially if a man has the gift of fluency, needs nothing but the opportunity of exercising that gift. But fluency is a fatal gift, unless it is guarded and buttressed by careful thought and preparation. The man who relies on fluency alone may become as 'sounding brass and clanging cymbal'; he will certainly not be an able minister of the New Testament. When we are told that 'preachers, like poets, are born, not made,' let us remember that all the great examples we have of poetic genius have reached 'the heights they gained and kept' by the drudgery of painstaking labour. Read the lives of such men as Milton, Tennyson, and Browning, and you will easily discover that there is no royal road to excellence but that of hard work.

A closer study of the New Testament will help to dissipate these erroneous notions. The great words which set forth the preacher's duty, 'herald,' 'ambassador,' 'steward,' whatever else they imply, at least demand this—that the message to be proclaimed shall be adequately known and clearly and

fully expressed. As Christ's representative, as God's ambassador, as a steward of the mysteries of the gospel, it is demanded of every preacher that he should so prepare himself and his message that it may truly represent the divine will; and in its proclamation be so free from all hindrance and defect as to gain ready admittance to, and the greatest possible influence on, the heart of every one to whom it is spoken. This is not an easy task, and for its right performance we need strenuous preparation.

We must not be unduly influenced by the reported methods of great preachers—e.g. Beecher and Spurgeon, who are said to have sometimes prepared the sermon immediately before entering the pulpit. It must be remembered that if this is an accurate account of their method during the later years of life, they were both men of exceptional gifts, and had gained their power through long years of patient and continuous study, and constant practice in sermon construction. Excellence comes from taking pains, and that which seems to be so easy to the great master is really the result of hard and laborious toil. Preaching demands as much and as careful preparation as is needed to acquire ease and facility in doing any other task.

So the great and effective preachers always

thought. Richard Cecil held that the preacher needed preparation as much as the physician, and that his work could only be ineffective without it. Professor Hoppin taught his students that the preacher's profession was *a difficult profession*, and that he should 'expect hard work.'

The Bishop of Ripon—himself a great preacher—says in his *Lectures*: 'I do not believe that we can evade the wholesome law of hard work, which tests earnestness and invigorates power. The wish to reach the goal without running over the course is the sign of a vain and foolish mind. I would not, therefore, even if I could, give you a single rule which would enable you to evade the labour and industry which are indispensable to all who desire to do lasting good. I speak to you as men who are, I hope, persuaded that only honest hard work and patient study can lead to true success. Let us dismiss from our minds at once the delusive idea that we can ever do worthy work by unworthy means—that we can reap without sowing, or have any hope of winning the race by evading the fair rules of the course.'

Every true preacher will acknowledge the force of this statement, and will be ready to confirm it by his own experience.

The preacher's preparation is made up of three

distinct parts: the preparation of the *man*, of the *sermon*, of the *preacher*.

1. The preparation of *the man*. Here one or two things may be taken for granted. We are all agreed that the first step in the preparation of the man is that change which is called *Conversion*, or, in New Testament phrase, the New Birth, 'being justified by faith,' &c. He who offers the blessings of the gospel to others must have tasted its sweetness and felt its power in his own soul. Sometimes, perchance, an unconverted preacher may be used in the conversion of sinners; but that is not God's usual method. We are further agreed that every preacher must be *called of God* to this great work. Deep in his own heart there must be the conviction that God demands this particular service from him. Where there is no evidence of such a call, there is no excuse for entering on the work.

Again, there must be such a dower of the grace of the Holy Spirit as to produce a thorough and intense consecration to the service of God; such a surrender to Christ as makes a man willing to do any service God may have for him to do. If consecration means anything, it means putting yourself into such a position that God is able to use you; and this implies a willingness to become as perfect an instrument as possible. The preacher is to

study to show himself a workman approved unto God.'

On this subject the young preacher would do well to study the recorded experiences of some of the most successful evangelists of modern days. The biographies of such fervent preachers as Jonathan Edwards, Professor Finney, Thomas Collins, Dwight L. Moody, and others of a similar character, will reveal to him, as nothing else perhaps can do, the true secret of successful evangelism. One illustration will be sufficient to show this.

'It is a well-known fact that Mr. Moody, before going to England on his great evangelistic campaigns in 1871–5, experienced a peculiar unveiling of the love of God, although it was a matter of which he rarely spoke. He had been a remarkably successful evangelist on many lines previously. At the time referred to, however, he had been moved to unwonted prayerfulness, in which others joined him, that he might be filled with the Spirit. Under these deep exercises of mind, while in New York, one day there broke upon him such a realization of the Divine Love that it wellnigh overpowered him, so that he cried out, "O Lord, stay Thy hand."

'This realization was the earnest, as all the world knows, of the profoundest spiritual awakenings in

England and America witnessed within the past century.'[1]

The demand for the utmost preparation in every direction is insistent and emphatic.

What does this involve? The careful training of the voice, and ability to use the English language with a fair amount of accuracy. In this respect the young preacher will have much to learn; but if he is loyal, he will spare no labour that will help him to make his Master's message thoroughly effective; he will endeavour to speak every word and sentence as it ought to be spoken. All that is faulty in pronunciation and grammar, or anything else which would mar the effect of the message or diminish its force, must be definitely and deliberately put aside. People complain, and have a right to complain, when the man who claims to be God's ambassador is so careless or lazy in the utterance of his message that they can only hear part of what he says; or when he mars its beauty and force by grammatical and vocal errors which could be remedied by taking pains. The young preacher should *study* such a book as Dr. Mair's small volume on *Speaking*; and, in addition, get a competent and candid friend to criticize his efforts, and point out his blunders and defects; and then set himself at any cost to remedy them.

[1] Henry C. Mabie, D.D.

The preparation of the man further involves careful and constant study of the Bible. I am not speaking now of sermon preparation, but of that broader study of the Book which is necessary if we are to declare 'the whole counsel of God.' This gives the preacher a wide outlook, and enables him to make a careful survey of religious truth in its variety and fullness. The prairie-hunters of America, accustomed as they are to gaze over wide areas in quest of game, are said to acquire telescopic vision, and to be able to distinguish objects at a very long distance. But with this, they also acquire microscopic vision, so that nothing near escapes them. So the preacher needs both *long*-sight and *in*-sight; he must study the great facts of revelation, and also be able to estimate aright the teaching of a single text.

Nothing less than this should satisfy the preacher who wishes to be a 'man approved unto God, handling aright the word of truth.' To acquire such knowledge involves not so much large leisure and ample scholarship, but the habit of frequent reading, and deep meditation on the Sacred Scriptures. The man who lives with 'the Word' will come to find at length that its richest treasures are at his disposal, and that his utterances are marvellously enriched by its wealth of wisdom.

He should also study theology, and acquire a

careful, comprehensive, and systematic knowledge of God's dealings with, and purposes concerning, men. And his knowledge of theology must be kept fresh and vigorous. A man who has outgrown his theology, or got out of touch with living truth, is not well equipped for teaching the will of God.

The reasons for painstaking effort in this direction are not always seen by the beginner, who is sometimes rightly warned not to take his theology into the pulpit. The study of theology will, however, help him in many directions. It will tend to clear his ideas, to systematize his knowledge, to train him to exactness in thought and accuracy of expression, and will frequently keep him from making false and exaggerated statements respecting the truths he preaches.

Another necessary element in the preparation of the man is wide reading. (This does not necessarily mean the reading of numerous books, or the acquisition of a costly library.) The preacher needs to cultivate a wide intellectual outlook. He ought to know something of the best literature, of the world's past history, of the progress of science and philosophy, and of current events. This can be done even by the man of little leisure, if he resolutely sets himself to read only the *master books* on any subject, and leaves ephemeral and small literature to those

who have nothing better to do. And I venture to suggest that every preacher would do well to study *a good newspaper*; and if it is a good one, wisely chosen and carefully read, he will find the knowledge thus gained exceedingly useful. Not that it should be his text-book when preparing sermons—though I have heard of preachers whose Sunday sermons were largely inspired by the previous day's *Spectator*—but that it will keep him in touch with the general current of the world's history, and furnish him with new and striking illustrations for pulpit use.

He must also study human nature. Just as the artist studies the materials with which he works, the architect the materials of which his building is to be composed; so the preacher ought to know something of the inner life of men, and how to make them responsive to his appeals—how best to touch and influence the reason, affections, will, and judgement of the members of his congregation.

This looks, perhaps, impossible, in the limited time at our disposal; but much can be done by a systematic use of our leisure moments, and the introduction of method into our studies. And we may be quite certain that every effort we put forth for the better training of our general powers will help us when we come to the more precise and particular work of preparing sermons.

V

THE PREPARATION OF THE SERMON

(*a*) *The Text*

The great aim of the preacher who wants to excel is to master the minds of his hearers; to do this he must first master his subject so as to be able to present it in a new light. He who can do this will always command attention.

A good sermon should be like a wedge, all tending to a point. Eloquence and manner are the hammer that sends it home; but the *sine qua non* is the disposition of the parts, the shape. I am convinced this is the secret of sermon making. I gave two years to the study of it.

LIFE OF ARCHBISHOP MAGEE.

V

The Preparation of the Sermon

(a) The Text

BEFORE commencing the work of actual and direct preparation it is necessary to try to define what we mean by a Sermon. Our conception of what a sermon is will naturally affect our method of construction and the form and substance of our utterances. The preacher is not a commentator, a writer of essays, or a Sunday-school teacher; he is really a prophet, a herald or messenger for God. While his sermon will contain exposition, ought to be characterized by teaching power, and will sometimes remind us of the style of the essayist, it will be something different, and contain something more, than these. Many excellent definitions are to be found in the homiletic text-books, the most practical and comprehensive being perhaps that given by Dr. Phelps: 'A sermon is an oral address to the popular mind, upon religious truth contained in

the Scriptures, and elaborately treated with a view to persuasion.' If we change one word in this sentence, and substitute 'rhetorically' for 'elaborately,' we shall have a fairly clear and concise definition of the manner, the subject, and the purpose of preaching. The sermon *is an oral address*, not a written essay; it is *based on Scripture*; and it has for its main purpose and end the *persuasion of men* (see Acts xxvi. 16–18).

The next step (before even the text is chosen) is for the preacher to determine in his own mind his purpose in preaching on the particular occasion for which his sermon is to be prepared. He should start with a well-defined aim, should ask himself, What is this sermon to do? Unless he has in his mind a definite and clear object, he will be almost certain to join the useless company of those 'who aim at nothing and hit it.' The Rev. B. Hellier, who spent the greater part of a long life in the work of training young men for the Methodist ministry, frequently and earnestly counselled his students to fix for their own guidance the aim of the sermon, before commencing to shape and fashion it. The preacher who asks himself at the start, What do I wish to do, or to lead the people to do, by means of this sermon? will be saved from much hesitation and useless thought. His pathway will

be clearly marked before him, and he will know the particular goal he wishes to reach.

Having reached this point, write out carefully the *exact subject* you wish to preach about, and let this be your guide in searching for the most suitable text. To many a young preacher this is the most difficult part of his task—to select the text which contains his topic exactly, and from which his sermon may be logically and rightly involved. But this difficulty is not so great as it seems, and may by care and a little practice be almost entirely removed. He will find in his daily study of the Bible that some texts will appeal to him with almost irresistible force; and, so far from choosing such passages himself, they will, so to speak, choose him, will get such a firm grip of his spirit that they will live with him, and be constantly urging him to preach from them. Such texts demand, and ought to receive, the most careful attention. They should be immediately registered, together with the subjects they have suggested and the thoughts which have gathered round them.

What then? Is it wise to use such a text as the basis for the next Sunday's discourse? Not unless you are driven into a corner, and have nothing else available. Sometimes it will be almost impossible to refrain from using it. The message will come

with such peremptory authority as to dominate the soul, and demand immediate utterance. But usually the best plan will be to let it live with you for weeks, for months, and sometimes for years, till you have so mastered its teaching that you cannot help preaching about it. In this way the truth it contains will get ripened, or, to vary the figure, digested, and you will be able clearly and powerfully to expound it to your hearers.

An illustration drawn from personal experience may throw some light on the matter. In the early years of my ministry—when, a student fresh from college, I had to face the same congregation three times every week—the difficulty was a real and practical one. Distrustful of my own experience, I sought help from all available sources, and was put on the right track by reading some of the best books I could procure on preaching. Spurgeon's *Lectures on Preaching*, and the treatises of Beecher, Blaikie, and Shedd, gave me some valuable hints. From these and other authors I learned—amongst other things—the value of reading with special care any and every book within reach which could elucidate or set in a new light the teaching of Holy Scripture; the help to be derived from conversations with my hearers during pastoral visitations; the advantage of following the course of the

'Christian Year,' and thus bringing the *great themes* of Christianity prominently before the congregation at times when their minds were to some extent preoccupied with them; in a word, to keep my mind open to suggestions from any and every quarter.

The difficulty of finding suitable and sometimes striking texts was soon overcome, and by a method which has stood the test of some years' experience. When reading I always kept at hand a pile of loose sheets of paper, and whenever any topic or text presented itself which promised to be fruitful for sermon work, it was transferred to one of the slips, together with any thoughts born of the moment. Sometimes a complete outline would in a few minutes be thus fixed for future use; and by the constant use of this plan I soon gathered together a large amount of sermon seed.

Years afterwards it was interesting to note, in the *Life of Dwight L. Moody*, that he adopted a somewhat similar method. He kept by him a number of Sermon Envelopes, on each of which was written some topic; and in these he gradually accumulated the results of his reading and experience —exposition, illustration, every variety of matter— until the material gathered would only need careful selection, thought, and arrangement to form a

complete and effective address. By following some such method, materials for sermon-making will rapidly accumulate, and the preacher will always have plenty of stock in hand.

Before making a final selection of the text, the preacher should subject it to a careful scrutiny, and thus discover whether it is suitable for his purpose. Two or three principal tests the text must always conform to.

1. It must be a genuine passage of Scripture, a true '*word of God*.' It should not be taken from apocryphal writings, it must not be of doubtful authenticity, should not be an incorrect or faulty translation (here is the value of the R.V.), nor disregard the analogy of faith. It will be well to distinguish carefully between the actual words of God and the definite teaching of His agents and instruments, and the sentiments of mere historical characters. The utterances, e.g., of Job's three friends cannot be of the same value for 'instruction in righteousness' as the words of Christ and His apostles. The preacher must beware of using a merely human utterance as if it came from God.

2. It should contain a complete sense in itself, and should express a complete sense of the inspired writer. No one, perhaps, is likely to follow the ludicrous example of the old-time preacher, who

rebuked the women of his congregation for their fantastic style of hair-dressing, by delivering a discourse based on a fragment of Matt. xxiv. 17, 'top not come down.' But the days of fragmentary and misapplied texts are not yet past; and even famous preachers have been guilty of clipping and mangling the Word of God.

3. It should be fitted for edification—should possess ample materials for producing a helpful and fruitful discourse. Ludicrous and grotesque texts may show the ingeniousness of the preacher, but they are not usually helps to edification. Dr. Dale branded such attempts as 'jugglery with texts,' and condemned the use of the pulpit for such unseemly exhibitions. The text should be simple, plain, dignified, fresh—therefore not too familiar—and full of teaching. Sometimes it will be the preacher's duty to select a hard text, and spend his full strength in opening up its treasures for his people. Sometimes he will select a striking and unhackneyed passage, that by its means he may arrest the attention of the indifferent and gospel-hardened.

There is a further question, How can the preacher make most use of those pathetic and beautiful texts so freely scattered through the Scriptures, and which linger like sweet music on the ear? To take these as texts, means, frequently, to start on such a high

key that the poverty of the subsequent discourse is made only too apparent. Yet they appeal, and appeal most powerfully, to men of poetic and imaginative nature. No absolute rule can be given. Frequently it will be wise to take a text on the same subject, but of less exalted strain, and use the brighter and more musical passages as illustrations, or for the enrichment of the sermon. But if the texts themselves are rich in materials for preaching, they should not be discarded; the preacher must try to raise himself and his sermon as nearly to their level as possible.

4. It should have a real, vital relation to the sermon. It ought, when correctly expounded, to contain the *subject* of the sermon. No forced or allegorical interpretation should be put upon the text; it must be really *pertinent* to the matter in hand. Fidelity to this rule will keep the preacher from much discursiveness, and enable him to leave a correct and definite impression of the meaning of the text in the minds of his hearers.

The question of how to deal with the text is one of the most important we have to consider. Upon the answer we give to it will depend, to a great extent, the freshness, vigour, and reality of our teaching. Some preachers seem to be content when they have discovered the general topic to

which the text refers, and pursue their inquiries no further. This inevitably leads to monotony and sameness in their utterances. If our preaching is to be kept fresh, interesting, stimulating, and powerful, we must discover the precise and particular aspect of the truth revealed by the text, and treat it from that standpoint. Take any group of texts relating to one of the great doctrines—e.g. *Repentance*, Matt. iii. 2, Mark i. 15, Luke xiii. 3, Acts ii. 38, iii. 19, xvii. 30, Rom. ii. 4—and a careful examination of each will show that it has its own particular aspect of the truth to exhibit. It is the preacher's duty to set this forth, and by doing so his discourse will be made much more effective and interesting than if he merely talks at large on the great theme common to all the passages cited. The text is the germ of the whole discourse; clearness and appropriateness here means the adaptation of a perfect instrument to the end it is intended to serve.

In order to this, the preacher must ascertain the real meaning of the words and phrases contained in his text, and must study it in its relation to the context and to revealed truth as a whole. Thus the truth will be set in the clearest possible light in his own mind, and the knowledge thus gained will materially assist him in its proclamation. His greatest helps in this part of his task will be

the Lexicon, the Concordance, and the marginal readings and references of the R.V. All these should be studied with the greatest care.

Sometimes an effective sermon may be based on two texts, effectively contrasted and compared ; e.g. John viii. 12, 'I am the Light of the world'; Matt. v. 14, 'Ye are the light of the world,' where the likeness and the differences of the two light-bearers may be helpfully and strikingly exhibited. Another example may be quoted from the *Letters* of the Rev. John Ker. '*Amos vi.* 6, 2 *Cor. xi.* 28. Read in their connexion to see two characters found long ago and now, the selfish and the self-renouncing. Sketch their circumstances, enjoyments, and the result. The result of their pleasure (see Amos vi. 7, 8); the result of Paul's care, which had a Godlike joy in its heart; in the Christian Church and in the world; the end of consistent materialism and consistent Christianity.'

We have not thought it necessary to discuss here the advantage or disadvantage of the use of texts. We assume that all preachers of the 'Word of God' and of the 'New Covenant' will base their utterances on the written word. The use of the text is sanctioned by long-continued and almost universal custom; it furnishes an intellectual stimulus, it promotes variety in preaching and gives opportunity for the

interpretation and explanation of the Scriptures in public, is a perpetual reminder of the commission of the Christian minister, and lends dignity and authority to the preacher's message. It will be an ill day for the Church of Christ if the practice is abandoned.

VI

THE PREPARATION OF THE SERMON

(*b*) *Construction, Division, &c.*

Confusion and perplexity in writing is indeed without excuse, because any one may, if he pleases, know whether he understands and sees through what he is about; and it is unpardonable for a man to lay his thoughts before others, when he is conscious that he himself does not know whereabouts he is, or how the matter before him stands. It is coming abroad in disorder which he ought to be dissatisfied to find himself in at home.

BISHOP BUTLER.

Disdain not the old fashion of dividing your sermons into heads; a discourse which rejects these aids to perspicuity will turn out a bewildered rhapsody, without aim or effect, order or conclusion.

PALEY, *quoted* by REV. G. J. DAVIES.

The true way to get rid of the boniness of your sermon is not by leaving out the skeleton, but by clothing it with flesh. True liberty in writing comes by law, and the more thoroughly the outlines of your work are laid out the more freely your sermon will flow, like an unwasted stream between its well-built banks. . . . A sermon is not like a picture which (once printed) stands altogether before the eye. Its parts elude the memory. Give your sermon an orderly, consistent progress, and do not hesitate to let your hearers see it distinctly, for it will help them first to understand, and then to remember, what you say.

BISHOP PHILLIPS BROOKS.

VI

The Preparation of the Sermon

(*b*) *Construction, Division, &c.*

BY a wise use of the methods indicated in the previous paper much useful material will be accumulated, and the next step in the construction of the sermon made easier. The preacher has discovered the precise and particular aspect of the truth exhibited in his text, and this, of itself, will help him considerably in framing the outline of his discourse. He should be in no hurry to complete this stage of his preparation. This part of his task is of the highest importance, demands the closest attention, and will well repay the most deliberate and careful thought. It is probably true that the greatest sermons are not usually built on the lines of the homiletic models. This, however, does not mean that their authors had not studied with care and patience the rules of sermon-construction ; but that they have so fully digested and assimilated the practical instruction found in the text-books, as to be able to use it in

the most effective fashion by striking out a path for themselves. The beginner cannot hope to do this. He must study and use those rules which have stood the test of experience, and which the best authorities on the subject have formulated. Henry Ward Beecher was by no means a conventional or mechanical preacher, and certainly followed blindly no homiletic model; but he insists on the most careful study and arrangement as absolutely necessary to the young preacher.

'No man can speak well, the substance of whose sermons has not been prepared beforehand.'

'A sermon should be carefully arranged, and the material thoroughly digested.'

'No man can preach well, except out of an abundance of well-wrought material. Some sermons seem to start up suddenly, soul and body, but in fact they are the product of years of experience.'

In another place he uses an illustration drawn from the great Civil War in America to show how necessary to the preacher is the most careful preparation. 'If you will read the familiar correspondence of General Sherman during the war, which was published by the War Department, you will see that months and months before his great march he was studying the country through which he was about to go, its resources, its power of sustaining armies, its populous-

ness, the habits of the people—in short, everything that belonged to it, in every relation, and all the questions that could possibly arise in regard to it. He had discussed them on both sides and on two or three hypotheses, so that when he started upon his famous march he had really gone over the country in advance, and made himself the military master of its features and character.'

One of the most popular preachers of to-day, the Rev. J. H. Jowett of Birmingham, gives similar advice, advice which has behind it all the force of personal experience. He counsels the preacher first of all to 'get as nearly as possible the exact meaning of the text and to define its terms: e.g. if your text is "By grace are ye saved through faith," define clearly the great words of the text—"grace," "saved," "faith." Do not be satisfied until you have got at the very essence of these great truths. Ask yourself, "Can I put the meaning of this term into a phrase and say it is just that, and nothing else?" Here, the hardest labour is well repaid; you want to be so forceful and so clear that a hearer should find it impossible to say "I did not know what he was driving at"; he should be compelled to say rather, "Whether I liked the sermon or not, I knew exactly what he meant." Next, arrange your thoughts in simple steps, leading up to the proclamation of the truth you seek

to expound; starting from the terms, and moving towards the great issue—the end you have in view. Three or four great steps at this stage will be sufficient. Then write another outline, filling in further steps; and later a third, in which every thought should be in its proper place, and the sermon fully written out.' Mr. Jowett says that in his own preparation the first outline occupies one page; the second, three or four pages; while the finished sermon generally takes twelve pages.

It is hardly necessary to say that sermons should not be built always on the same plan—like so many houses in a terrace. This means burdening the congregation with a terrible monotony, and shutting the door against the most effective helps to freshness and vigour in our pulpit utterances. The true sermon should be a growth. Dr. Cuyler's words on this particular topic are well worth attention. 'When you have selected your passage from the Bible, let your sermon grow legitimately out of it. The connexion between every good sermon and its text is just as vital as the connexion between an apple-tree and its roots. . . . The text ought to spring up, as the root of your discourse, and send its trunk towering aloft as the central idea of that discourse. All the arguments, instructions, and exhortations are but as the boughs branching off from this central truth, giving breadth,

vigour, and spiritual beauty to the whole organic production.' If we keep in mind this great principle, that the sermon must throb and glow with the living force of truth, we shall not fall into the mistake of fashioning all our discourses after one pattern. They will be as various in their form as the truth which is in them demands.

Divisions are to be *discovered*, not merely *invented*. In framing the plan of our discourse we are not inventing materials, but arranging the thoughts of the text, so as to display and use them to the best advantage. The usefulness of divisions—though it is sometimes denied—is great; as without them the sermon will almost certainly lack *method*. They promote clearness of thought, help the progress of discussion, assist the hearer to remember the principal points of the discourse, and preserve unity of subject, together with variety in expression.

How may the right divisions for any particular text or discourse be discovered? There is no short and easy method. The true divisions we seek can only be discovered by patient and sometimes laborious thought. Some of the old scholastic methods may seem easy, but the ease is frequently found at the cost of effectiveness. Any one may find divisions by asking such questions as: '1. What is the subject? 2. What is predicated of it?

3. What is the relation between the two? Or, 1. Who is the speaker? 2. To whom does he speak? 3. Why does he utter this message?' &c., &c. Such a method is not always the best.

Compare an outline framed on such lines as the following, taken from the sermons of the Rev. W. L. Watkinson:

'THE SECRET OF STRENGTH.'—Zech. xii. 8.

I. A spiritual faith is pre-eminently calculated to fashion great character.

II. The age in which we live is one in which we may expect eminent character.

1. In Christ we have the most exalted conception of God.

2. In Christ we have the noblest ideal of humanity.

3. In the gift of the Spirit we have the largest measure of moral force.

Careful and concentrated thought about the text will, in time, give you the right standpoint from which to regard it, and the true line of cleavage. Dr. Kern, in his volume, *The Ministry to the Congregation*, gives a list of what he calls 'principles of division,' and adds illustrative examples. Some of these may be mentioned: 'Characteristics,'

'Aspects or Relations,' 'Points of Comparison,' 'Principles of Conduct,' 'Sources,' 'Applications,' 'Observations,' 'Motives,' &c., &c. He counsels the student to note these, and to seek out others for himself, by the careful analysis of good sermons, and thus prepare the way for a fresh and inspiring treatment of every text from which he proposes to preach.

In framing divisions a few rules ought always to be kept in mind, and their observance rigidly enforced.

1. The divisions should, if possible, be the preacher's own. It is possible, of course, to take another man's divisions, and fill up the body of the sermon with your own material; but this checks all originality, and tends to produce feebleness of thought. The preacher should aim at being a voice rather than an echo.

2. They should be few in number. Too many divisions will produce either too lengthy a discourse, or confusion of thought.

3. They should belong to the particular subject announced, and not to some general idea of the subject floating before the mind. They ought exactly to express the thought with which you intend to deal.

4. They should consist of strong, suggestive, and

distinct thoughts. If the divisions are weak, thin, or overlap each other, the discourse is foredoomed to failure.

5. They should be arranged in logical, and (if possible) in rhetorical order. Argument should lead on to argument, one thought should be the stepping-stone to the next, each division carrying the argument a step forward, until the climax is reached at the end. The best wine should always be kept till last.

Attention to these points will help to keep the sermon on the best lines, and to add to its effectiveness and power.

When the plan of the sermon is thus prepared, the next step will be the gathering of the necessary material for the filling up of the outline. How can this best be done? We have already pointed out that a careful study of the text, and its context, together with a sound analysis of its principal thoughts, will have placed a considerable body of material at our disposal. Now the resources of the preacher's memory can be drawn upon, the treasures of his commonplace books can be utilized, the living thoughts of his own mind can be evoked by meditation upon the theme before him, and the suggestions which have come to him during his previous study of the text, can be valued, classified,

and appreciated. If his mind is naturally fertile, and has been deepened and enriched by a wide course of preparatory reading, he will probably be in possession of more than enough matter to enable him to complete his sermon. *More than enough* he must have, if his discourse is to give any evidence of rich and varied thought. A sermon should never suggest that the preacher has used up all his resources in producing it; he should have behind it the treasures of a reserve of knowledge.

The beginner will probably have no such treasures and resources to fall back on; what is he to do? He must turn to his library, to read and digest the very best thoughts that he can find relating to his subject. He should not do this at an earlier stage of his work. Up to this point his reference books should be the only ones consulted; lexicon, concordance, commentaries, &c. Having defined his subject, gained a clear idea of the meaning of the text, and framed his outline, he may, if no other course is open to him, go to the rich fields of literature for material to clothe his outline. His method in reading must be, not compilation, but assimilation; he must read, not to pile up material merely, but by careful meditation to make the best thought of the ages his own. By this means he will enrich his own mind, and be saved, at least,

from the worst evils of plagiarism. The Rev. R. Cecil tells us that he followed a similar plan: 'I will not forestall my own views by first going to commentators. I talk over the subject to myself; I write down all that strikes me; and then I arrange what is written. After my plan is settled, and my mind has exhausted its stores, then I would turn to some of my great doctors to see if I am in no error; but I find it necessary to reject many good things which the doctors say—they will tell to no good effect in a sermon. In truth, to be effective, we must study more from nature, and less from the writings of men; we must study the book of Providence, the book of Nature, the heart of man, and the Book of God; we must read the history of the world; we must deal with matters of fact before our eyes.'

The beginner must not suppose that merely following any rules, however good, will make him a preacher. Instruction can save him from many mistakes, and help him to start on right lines. But more than this is needed. He must seek the help of the Holy Spirit in all his preparatory work; and he must not shrink from the hardest toil. For success in the pulpit, toil is necessary. The lazy preacher is a disgrace anywhere and to any pulpit. And to toil practice must be joined. The beginner,

especially if he wishes to excel, must cultivate the homiletic habit, be always on the alert to find sermon-seed—texts, thoughts, plans, &c.—and must use every fitting opportunity of exercising his powers. Thus prepared, and full of faith in God, he may hope for and expect success.

VII

THE PREPARATION OF THE SERMON

(*c*) *Illustrations*

All noble ornament is the expression of man's delight in God's work. —RUSKIN.

We cannot afford to lose the freshness and reality which comes from letting men see the eternal truths shining through the familiar windows of to-day, and making them understand that the world is as full of parables as it was when Jesus painted the picture of the vineyard between Jerusalem and Shechem, or took His text from the recent terrible accident at Siloam.—BISHOP PHILLIPS BROOKS.

VII

The Preparation of the Sermon

(*c*) *Illustrations*

IT is hardly too much to say that no preacher need hope to be either popular or successful to-day unless he has cultivated the 'Art of Illustration.' We live in an age of illustrations. The public demand in their books, magazines, and even newspapers, plenty of pictures; and Art is lending herself, with an ever-growing adaptation, to aid the writer in expressing the beauty and power of his thoughts. The more the preacher realizes this, and appreciates the reasons which lie behind this craving for illustrations, the more likely is he to cultivate his own powers in this direction, and endeavour to brighten his discourse with graphic picture and homely parable. He need not fear that this will lessen the dignity of the pulpit if it is wisely done. As quaint old Fuller puts it: 'Reasons are the pillars of the fabric of a sermon; but similitudes are the windows which give the best lights.' The student of sermonic

literature will find that in all ages of the history of the Church the most popular and influential preachers have used this aid to effective speech. St. Chrysostom and St. Augustine; Latimer, Luther, and Jeremy Taylor; Thomas Adams and Henry Smith; Dr. Guthrie and C. H. Spurgeon; Canon Liddon and Dr. Maclaren; Mark Guy Pearse and Dr. Parker, all alike have cultivated this faculty and used it with telling effect in addressing the people. There is even a higher sanction for the practice. He who 'spake as never man spake' is Himself our greatest Teacher, and, in His forceful parables and homely illustrations from nature and life, has set us an example which can never be equalled of the value of such methods of teaching. We are treading in the footsteps of the Highest when we wisely illustrate our sermons.

The 'Art of Illustration' may be defined as the art of brightening discourse; of letting in the light upon our arguments and exhortations. Turn to the dictionary and study the meanings there given: 'ILLUSTRATE—*to encircle with lustre or light, to light up; to make distinguished; to make clear to the mind; to explain; to explain and adorn by pictures.*' A careful study of these definitions will enable us to see some of the main uses of illustration, and save us from some serious errors.

We must never regard or use an illustration as mere ornament; by its very nature and essence it should be not only beautiful, but *useful.* It must, like the windows in a house, serve a definite purpose. Every illustration should help the sermon to be attractive, easily understood, and forceful. 'Illustrations are the windows of thought. If they are stained windows, which colour the light rather than transmit it, they will inevitably attract the thought to themselves, rather than reveal that thought to us. How can we make illustrations interpret the truth to the hearer, instead of diverting the hearer from the truth? If they can be so employed as to throw their light upon Scripture, and so irradiate the Word of God that it shall become luminous, while the illustration is quite forgotten in the higher glory of the text, the end is attained.'[1]

The preacher should note the chief ways in which illustrations can help him in his task:

1. *Illustrations help to make the sermon attractive and interesting.* When wisely chosen and skilfully used, they quicken the attention of the audience, gain the ear of the careless, and call back the wandering minds of the preoccupied. Dr. Guthrie tells that at the commencement of his ministry he determined that he would so preach as to compel

[1] Rev. A. J. Gordon.

the attention of his hearers. In order to this, he carefully watched his congregation, to see what caught and fixed their attention most readily. When he discovered that it was the illustrations used, he set himself to cultivate that faculty to the fullest extent; and by so doing gained the ear of the crowd.

2. *Illustrations explain the truth, and make it more easy of comprehension.* They are as useful to the preacher as are diagrams to the teacher of Euclid, or well-executed drawings to the lecturer on architecture. For this reason, they are the greatest possible help in preaching to children and to all who are not accustomed to the subtleties of metaphysical thought.

3. *They help to implant the truth in the mind, and the memory to retain it.* If the preacher uses illustrations skilfully, he is enlisting two senses instead of one in attention to the truth. He is really painting word-pictures, and these appeal to the eye as well as to the ear. Bishop Simpson, who is no mean authority, said that illustrations were 'like pictures to the eye, and help to fasten truth in the memory.' The story, the proverb, the bit of personal experience, will often linger in the memory when the powerful argument or the great principle is forgotten, and will help the hearer to recall the truth which it explained.

4. *Illustrations usually appeal to all classes of persons*

in the audience. By their means the preacher can make his *very* best thoughts clear and plain both to the children and to the older minds in his congregation. As Dr. Blaikie well says: 'An apt illustration is fitted to interest the most cultivated philosopher and the youngest child. Illustration, in fact, is one of the chief instruments for enabling a preacher to fuse his audience together and treat it as a unity. Some parts of a discourse may be adapted to one class and some to another; but the illustrations are for all.'

5. *Illustrations help to make a sermon impressive and effective.* They frequently arouse the emotions, and may be so used as to be like hooks put into the appeal, to enable it to fasten on the conscience, and work with power in the mind of the hearer. Dr. Porter is said to have used illustrations in this way. Dr. Dewey records: 'Out of his treasury, wherever it was, he was always bringing some pertinent illustrations: some words from Baxter or Milton, uttered in appropriate circumstances; some incident from the life of Boerhaave or Oberlin; or some grand historical anecdote which fell upon the point to which it was applied with astonishing force. It carried irresistible conviction; it drove the nail to the quick. It was light and power; it was lightning that rent the hardest obstruction in its way.'

6. *The skilful use of striking illustrations contributes one of the principal charms to preaching.* No matter whether the preacher is called to minister to a country or town congregation, he will find the charm and effectiveness of his sermons greatly increased by a wise and prudent use of illustrations. And even where the power of imagination seems to be lacking, one has only to set oneself resolutely to the task of arousing and cultivating the latent faculty, in order to be possessed of one of the most helpful and impressive forces which the orator can command.

Methods of Illustration

The methods of illustration are various; but by diligent and constant study, and by close and unceasing observation, the preacher should endeavour to make himself master of every possible method. 'Three qualities,' says Miss Anne Mozley, 'are essential to a perfect illustration. It must be apt, it must be original, and it must be characteristic of its author. . . . The simile that lives is of the essence of the page where it is enshrined, coeval with the matter it illuminates, or at least flashing upon the author while he still muses upon what he has written.' This is setting a very

high standard. And, lest we should be altogether discouraged, the same author adds: 'Few men are invested with the gift of original illustration; many can use metaphor from the open, acknowledged stock of all mankind.' In order to be able to draw from this common stock the materials suitable for his own needs and requirements, the preacher must learn of what it consists, and where he is likely to find it in rich abundance.

1. *Notice the illustrations which are available in the very words in common use.* Emerson has characterized language as 'fossil poetry,' and Archbishop Trench, in commenting on the phrase, added the suggestion that 'language is fossil history.' No better guide to this part of our subject can be found than the latter author's interesting little volume on *The Study of Words.* If the student is unacquainted with it, let him read it carefully at the earliest opportunity; it will open to him an almost unlimited wealth of picturesque ideas, and reveal an ever fresh and fertile source of illustration.

Great writers have always made a skilful use of well-chosen words. Coleridge has pointed out that 'the collocation of words is so artificial in Shakespeare and Milton, that you may as well think of pushing a brick out of a wall with your forefinger, as attempt to remove a word out of any of their finished passages.'

The same thing is true of a great part of the Bible; while every cultured reader knows that both Tennyson and Ruskin owe the music of their most beautiful and finished passages to their skilful choice and more skilful arrangement of words. The preacher should learn from them to link thoughts that breathe to words that burn.

2. In studying language, *note again, the power of a well-chosen epithet.* It is no doubt true here that what is one man's strength is another man's weakness, and that most beginners need rather to repress than to cultivate the use of adjectives. Still, the observant reader of any of our classic literature will not fail to note how greatly the charm of style is enhanced by the skilful use of vigorous and elegant epithets. It is undoubtedly true that 'epithets which add nothing to the picture detract from its impressiveness'; but it is equally true that if epithets are really descriptive, well-chosen, and deftly used, they add greatly both to the strength and charm of discourse.

3. Another helpful method of illustration is found *in the use of proverbs and aphorisms.* These, when properly used, add point and vigour to any style. The usefulness of these 'short sentences drawn from long experience' is well expressed by Bacon—'they serve not only for ornament and delight, but also for active

and civil use, as being the edge tools of speech which cut and penetrate the knots and business of affairs.' They help the preacher to condense into a few words the substance of many sentences, and to do it so effectively as to make those few words fasten on, and abide in, the memory. Every one should read and study this department of literature. Dr. Trench's volume *On Proverbs* will help the reader to see the treasures which lie in these gems of speech ; and if he will add the Wisdom-Literature of the Bible and the Apocrypha, and such modern collections as Mr. Spurgeon's *Salt-Cellars*, he will soon be master of rich stores ; possessions which will increase in value as he becomes more familiar with them.

4. Again, the preacher has at his disposal, for purposes of illustration, *everything which can be included under the head of figurative or symbolic language.* Metaphor, simile, figure, comparison, impersonation, imagery, parable, fable—the whole of the field controlled by fancy and imagination—are all his ready instruments, and can be used in the prosecution of his great task. This is not the place to discuss the meaning and use of the several varieties of symbolic language—for this purpose the student must refer to a good treatise on Rhetoric. But if he wishes to be an expert in the use of these illuminating figures, he must be familiar with them, know their uses and

dangers, and study their value in the writings of the great masters.

5. Another, and that, perhaps, the most useful of all the methods of illustration for ordinary pulpit use, remains to be noticed, viz. *the use of anecdote.* In this is included the rich and varied store of facts, incidents, striking occurrences, and the like, which can be drawn from science, history, biography, natural scenery, and personal experience. These stores are practically inexhaustible, and the already wide field is constantly being enriched and broadened by the progress of science, the researches of historians, and the additions made to our knowledge of the world by travellers and explorers.

The Sources of Illustration

The sermon-builder, at the beginning of his career, will probably imagine that his greatest difficulty will be to find illustrations sufficient and suitable for his needs. He will possibly be tempted to add to his library a *selection*, if not a *collection* of 'Handbooks' and 'Encyclopædias of Illustrations.' Without absolutely condemning these so-called 'helps,' which may occasionally be of service, our desire is to point out a better and more satisfactory way. The best advice which can be given on this topic is: Select

your own illustrations and grow as many as you can. Sources of illustration lie all about you, ready to your hand. Your general reading, especially in the departments of science, history, and biography, will furnish you with an unceasing supply, if you are constantly on the look-out for them. The daily newspaper, scanned with open eyes and an alert imagination, will also prove a fruitful hunting-ground; while the round of daily life, the home, the street, the market, the country, the summer holiday, will bring a constant and ever fresh supply of the richest materials for illustrating your sermons. Personal experience may also be used, although here great care is required, or your hearers may be tempted to say that you preach 'I' with greater frequency and fervency than you preach Christ. If the habit of looking for illustrations everywhere is cultivated, and the student makes a record of his discoveries in his commonplace book, he will find that he will gradually come into possession of such a store of fresh, vigorous, and illuminating matter as will almost embarrass him from its very richness. He will then discard all his bought collections.

One or two other points must not be overlooked. Illustrations may be freely used; but only if they are pointed, pertinent, and wisely selected. The wise preacher will use only the best, remembering

that they are not fairy lamps for ornament, but rather lamps to illumine a common highway. 'Never take a text to suit an anecdote.' 'Never use an anecdote unless you are sure of its truth.' Doubtful stories, whether they are American or home-grown, have no place in the pulpit, and must be resolutely shunned by the preacher of 'the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God.'

VIII

THE PREPARATION OF THE SERMON

(*d*) *The Application*

The principle of the Canon of *Persuasion* (leaving out of view the power of the Holy Ghost, which is the strongest of all persuasion) is, that the sermon should aim (1) to persuade the mind by argument; (2) to persuade the heart by appealing to the emotions; and (3) to persuade the will by stimulating it to effort. While the three kinds of persuasion are combined, more or less, in the sermon, one of them should distinctly predominate, according to the character of the text. The best of all persuasion is that which runs and quivers and flows through the whole. But the sermon may have the persuasion oozing out at its joints; or, better still, concentrated at the end, in one great irresistible volume of overpowering force. It is absolutely necessary to have the element of persuasion in every sermon.

DR. W. B. POPE.

VIII

The Preparation of the Sermon

(*d*) *The Application*

IN the evangelical and in the evangelistic pulpit the application is regarded as the most important part of the sermon. It should be the freshest, the most vigorous, and the best prepared part of the whole discourse. It must not be left to be fashioned by the mood and inspiration of the moment, but must be so thoroughly prepared as to be the most pointed and effective part of the preacher's utterance. Here we come to the practical issue of our work; our aim being to make the living truth come into the closest contact with the conscience of every hearer. Complaint is frequently made to-day that this part of a preacher's work is often forgotten, and that in many pulpits the persuasive note, the close, earnest, pointed appeal to the conscience and heart is usually lacking. We have not a sufficiently wide knowledge of modern preaching to endorse this charge; but the very complaint shows that the

statement is not wholly without foundation. Here, if anywhere, the pulpit must be faithful. We cannot listen to the plausible excuse that if only the truth be proclaimed, it will apply itself. It is our business to press the application, to bring the truth right home to the mind and heart; we are to 'beseech men to be reconciled to God.'

Power to apply the truth is one of the marks of the effective preacher, and is the prominent characteristic of evangelistic preaching. It has been frequently pointed out that true evangelistic preaching is always the most attractive, the most helpful, and gives the richest and most abiding results. If we are to 'covet earnestly the best gifts' and to possess them, we must master this great secret of pulpit power.

It may be said that the term itself needs definition, that much so-called evangelistic preaching is thin and one-sided in its presentation of the gospel message; that its appeals are to the emotions rather than to the reason, the conscience, and the will; and that consequently its boasted results are neither deep nor abiding. Possibly there is a little truth in the objection. There is a false as well as a true method of evangelistic preaching; but the true may be distinguished from the false by its fidelity to Scripture, by its deep sympathy with men, by its authoritative and convincing appeals. The faithful evangelist

will be recognized by his powerful application; the appeals he makes will be characterized by their faithfulness, their authority, and their sympathetic and persuasive power.

1. *Fidelity to Scripture.* This does not mean merely that in his appeals the preacher will use Scripture as his starting-point, and Bible phrases as his catch-words; but that his spirit will be so saturated with the truths of the gospel that he will be familiar with its highest themes and its deepest mysteries. As a witness for God, as one who stands in the place of Christ, he will make himself master of the gospel message to men, so that his appeals will carry with them something of that mighty influence which resides in the Saviour's warnings and entreaties. As the representative of Christ, the ambassador of the Great King, he must use the thoughts and words of his Master as the foundation of his message; and the more thoroughly he is imbued with 'the mind of Christ,' the more authoritatively and effectively will he utter his appeals. He will not, indeed, stand aloof from the experiences and occupations of men. Business, literature, politics, social problems, the news of the world, &c., &c., these will give him admirable and effective illustrations; but the burden of his message, the inspiration of his sermon, the power of his appeal

must be drawn from another and a higher source. The message of the Bible must be reverently and lovingly studied and turned into the message for to-day, must be translated into current speech and applied to the daily needs of men, if it is to reach their hearts and mould their characters. The preacher will find this a task sufficient to occupy all his powers. To be really scriptural he must strive to proclaim the very essence of the gospel, and endeavour to eliminate from his message all merely traditional phrases, and those theological terms which convey no meaning to the average man. His appeals must have influenced his own spirit, if he is to make others feel their power. Perhaps too much of our ordinary pulpit exegesis is traditionary, and held more from custom than from conviction; and it will be well for us to remember that traditional views are frequently fatal to true insight and sound exegesis. Zangwill, in a recent volume, suggests that really to know and understand the greatness and force of the Bible revelation, it needs to be forgotten for a hundred years; so that men might come to its interpretation with fresh, observant, unbiassed minds. We do not endorse the method suggested, but the result he is pointing towards must be reached by the evangelist if his appeals are to be vigorous and striking.

2. *The note of authority.* The preacher is sent not only to declare the mercy, but to voice the demands of God, and therefore must use plain, courageous, convincing speech. He must speak with certainty, and ought to possess the courage and conviction of the prophet Micah, who declared, 'Truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord . . . to declare unto Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin.' Our fathers were men of might in this particular; and the signs which followed their preaching we must aim to reproduce in our own experience, or fail in our mission. We cannot use exactly their methods, cannot perhaps employ their terms, but we need to possess similar authority and produce equal results. The English soldier to-day would feel helpless if armed only with the crossbows and other equipment of the followers of the Black Prince; but while using modern arms of precision he produces results and wins victories equal to any of the exploits of the past. And the evangelist of to-day must make his appeals effective or he will do nothing.

We need to ask ourselves whether this note of authority and power is missing, or even less prominent in our preaching than in that of yore. If it is we must at all costs restore it. Has modern criticism exercised an unconscious influence over us, and enfeebled our utterances? Do we speak with

bated breath and faltering tongue of the great mysteries of our holy religion; or are we bold and confident in our speech? In a recent essay on the intellectual future of Romanism, Mr. Mallock endeavoured to show that 'if the Christian religion holds its own at all in the face of secular knowledge, it is the Christian religion as embodied in the Church of Rome, and not in any form of Protestantism, that will survive in the intellectual contest.' The fascination of the Church of Rome for many minds has been its claim of *authority*. To the false authority of the Church thus claimed we must oppose the truer and nobler authority of the Spirit of Life in the 'Word,' if our mission is to be rightly accomplished. We too must pray with our fathers:

> The Spirit of convincing speech,
> Of power demonstrative impart,
> Such as shall every conscience reach,
> And sound the unbelieving heart.

3. *Our appeals must be full of sympathy.* Authority may be claimed, but the claim will not be conceded unless we can also convince men of our sympathy and earnest desire to help them. The men who felt the authority of Christ admired the graciousness of His words. And our task is not accomplished when by our fervent appeals we have roused the aspirations

of men, when we have revealed their need and helplessness—not even when we have led them to the Fountain of all grace and inspiration, and pointed them to Him who can beget in them the new life; we must endeavour to lead them on to perfection, and to show them the glorious privileges and the rich inheritance of the sons of God. We ourselves must know something of the psalmist's experience, 'Blessed is the man whom Thou choosest, and causest to approach unto Thee, that he may dwell in Thy courts; we shall be satisfied with the goodness of Thy house, the holy place of Thy temple.' Unless we can offer certain and unfailing help and comfort, unless we can point to a source whence all the deeper yearnings of men can be satisfied, we shall not be able to justify our authority, or make our appeals authoritative.

We have to face, week by week, congregations of men and women who are burdened and overwrought, jaded and worn with the terrible wear and strain of modern life—some of them in acute danger of being overwhelmed in the waves of secularism or materialism—and they crave our help. The question they ask is, How can we gain power to endure? We must know their burdens and the remedy for their weariness. No appeal will be really effective unless we set before them

the power of a great ideal; show them that 'man does not live by bread alone,' that 'where there is no vision the people perish.' We must make them feel that we have seen the vision of the helping God; that we have proved the tenderness of the Almighty Father, the strength of the protecting Rock of Israel; and that the same blessed vision may be theirs. We must gain the old prophetic power, must dwell in the region where God imparts the secret of His strength to all faithful souls; and having learned by personal experience the true relation of the indwelling Christ to the soul of man, must reveal to others its mighty comfort.

4. *Persuasiveness.* Our business is to turn men to God. Our great task is to move the will and compel men to action. The mysterious power of the human will is regarded as one of the crucial problems of philosophy; and to influence that will in the right direction is the most difficult of all the preacher's tasks. How may we persuade men not only to begin, but also to sustain and develop, the true, spiritual, Christ-like life? We need to be able so to grip the conscience that men must be willing to be ruled by it, and be led at once and for ever to a nobler life. Are we doing this? Are we so filled with the power of the Spirit as to do this part of our work effectively? If our preaching

is to be successful it must be powerful and effective here.

There are difficulties in the way. Preachers lament that congregations are much less easily moved than they were even a score of years ago, that it is most difficult to-day to discover, much more to rouse and invigorate, the conscience. Does this point to any lack in modern evangelism? Is the *leakage*, which many churches have reluctantly to admit, due to the infirmity and frailty of human nature, or to defects in our presentation of the truth? Why do so many people leave the fold of the Church, and lapse into the ranks of the worldly? Is it because our preaching is lacking in this power of deep conviction, in this element of persuasion?

It is sometimes affirmed that the real reason is that the shadow is wanting in our preaching, that we do not follow the example of Paul, who said, 'Knowing therefore the fear of the Lord, we persuade men.' H. W. Beecher once said, 'Preaching that is wanting in shadow will be wanting in power.' Is this our lack? and, if so, how far can we return to the methods of earlier days? If we are to waken the conscience to a sense of responsibility and guard the heart against the inroads of sin, we must seek, and seek until we find, this persuasive power. We

cannot, perhaps, preach the 'terror of the Lord' in old-time phraseology—the words have become unreal to us; but we must discover a way to make our hearers realize the heinous character of sin and the danger of regarding it with indifference. The true preparation for a great revival would seem to be to make the multitude understand and feel the reality and importance of scriptural teaching concerning sin. Until we can speak with authority and sympathy here we shall not realize persuasive power in its fullness. Our words will be powerless unless we are in fullest sympathy with the word of our Master and the hearts of those to whom we interpret it. Only when fully inspired with the Spirit will our hearers say of our preaching:

> How deep you were within the books of God
> To us, the speaker in his parliament;
> To us, the imagined voice of God Himself;
> The very opener and intelligencer
> Between the grace, the sanctities of heaven,
> And our dull workings.

These, then, are the chief marks of all true application: Fidelity to Scripture, Authoritative Speech, Intelligent Sympathy, Powerful Persuasion. And the men who possess these things, together with the power of the Holy Spirit, will be successful in their mission.

IX

THE PREACHER IN THE PULPIT

Delivery

The less you think about yourself while in the pulpit the better. Leave your own self-consciousness and your own reputation down under the pulpit stairs. Look at your auditors as immortal beings bound to the judgement-seat of Christ, and remember that you are to meet them there and to render your account for discharging your duty to them. Then seek the power from on high and preach for souls. Preach as if the light of eternity flashed into your face. The more soul you put into your preaching the more souls you will bring to Jesus Christ.

DR. CUYLER.

Never begin to preach without notes with any idea of saving yourselves work by it. If you do, you will fail; and you will richly deserve to fail. Any suspicion of this among your people will destroy your hold on them. Your own minds will deteriorate; and your sermons will lose, not finish only, but body and vigour.

DR. STORRS.

IX

The Preacher in the Pulpit

Delivery

THE preacher's task is not finished when his sermon is duly prepared, and a neatly written manuscript lies on his desk. A sermon, according to our definition, is an 'oral address to the popular mind'; and the main purpose of the preacher is not merely to manufacture sermons, but to implant the truth of the gospel in the hearts of his hearers. The sermon has yet to be delivered. Much has been written as to the best and most effective method of pulpit discourse, and the subject can hardly be said to be fully settled. So much has been done, however, of late years, to throw the light of history and experience on the matter, that the right method is no longer doubtful. Some have argued warmly in favour of the preacher reading from his carefully prepared manuscript, and the oft-quoted example of Dr. Chalmers is usually cited when this method is advocated. The advantages of the plan are

obvious; it enables the reader to state his argument with greater precision, and furnishes the opportunity for a more careful vocabulary and a more highly polished style than is possible to the extempore preacher. The disadvantages are still more easily seen. Reading in the pulpit tends to monotonous utterance, it fetters the preacher and weakens his power of thought, it hinders him from using to the full that personal magnetism which makes a speaker so attractive and forceful, and he loses all the great practical advantages of spoken discourse. Sydney Smith's[1] rebuke of 'reading' preachers is not yet out of date. 'Pulpit discourses have insensibly dwindled from speaking to reading; a practice of itself sufficient to stifle every germ of eloquence. It is only by the fresh feelings of the heart that mankind can be profitably affected. What can be more ludicrous than an orator delivering stale indignation and fervour of a week old; turning over whole pages of violent passion written out in fair text; reading the tropes and apostrophes into which he is hurried by the ardour of his mind; and so affected at a preconcerted line and page that he is unable to proceed further? The great object of modern sermons is to hazard nothing; their characteristic is decent debility; which alike

[1] 1771 to 1845.

guards their authors from hideous errors and precludes them from striking beauties.' Another method is reciting—memoriter preaching; or, as the Scotchmen call it, 'mandating.' A few great names may be cited in support of this practice, but the great burden it imposes on the memory, and the immense amount of time needed to 'commit' two discourses week by week, have prevented it from becoming popular. Really, this is worse and more artificial than reading; it is better to read from manuscript than to give a poor and less effective recitation of the same matter from the tablets of memory.

For an 'oral address to the popular mind' the true method is that which is called *extempore.* It is the historic method. It has been used by all, or nearly all, the great masters of pulpit eloquence. St. Chrysostom, St. Augustine, St. Bernard, Luther, John Wesley, Spurgeon, were all extempore preachers. This, of course, does not mean that the preacher comes to his work quite unprepared, and intends to speak from the inspiration of the moment; but rather that he knows what he has to say, but does not know how he is to say it. Sometimes, indeed, it means more than this, for a wise and careful preacher will often so prepare himself as well as his sermon that both his thoughts and his words are equally ready for his use. Those passages which ought to be,

and which he intends to be, most impressive and forceful—e.g. the introduction, divisions, application, &c.—will frequently be thus prepared. This is the method which gives the preacher the freest and fullest command of himself and of his message, and enables him to use all his powers of body and mind in the utterance of it. Sometimes, perhaps, he will be conscious of not doing his best. Shakespeare tells us that he has seen 'great clerks'

> Shiver and turn pale;
> Make periods in the midst of sentences;
> Throttle their practis'd accents in their fear;
> And in conclusion doubly have broke off.

But he must take the risk if his powers and capabilities are to have full play in the pulpit.

The preacher who masters the secret of success here will, other things being equal, have immense advantages over either the 'reader' or the 'reciter.' His speech will be electric; he will be able to come into closest contact with the personality of the hearer. He will be able to smite the conscience, unhampered by the paper armour, or even by the memory of it; and by reason of his freedom will be able to measure the effect of his discourse upon the audience. But in order to wield the power he must be willing to pay the price. The extempore preacher must pay special attention to his training and to the prepara-

tion of himself. He must learn to think, to think without using the pen, or noting on paper the sequence of his thoughts. He must prepare thoroughly, and ought, at least during the earlier years of his career, to write his sermons fully. He must also learn to think right through his subject, before preaching, so that he may be familiar with its trend of thought. He must cultivate the faculty of expression; gain an abundant supply of ideas, a full and accurate verbal knowledge of Scripture, a rich and copious vocabulary, and a fluent use of his mother-tongue. But if he will take the trouble which all this implies he will find himself well repaid. He will gain the stimulus which comes from immediate contact with an audience, will have greater freedom and fuller confidence in addressing his congregation, and will produce a more immediate and more abiding effect.

A few words may be added on the immediate preparation of the preacher for his pulpit work. The *man* is prepared by giving careful attention to his general culture. The *sermon* must be so prepared as to make it an efficient instrument for its special work. And the *preacher* must be prepared, so that when face to face with his audience his work may be effectively and successfully performed. We must not think our preparation complete until we have by prayer and communion with God obtained the

presence and help of His Holy Spirit, filled our own spirit with fervour, and brought ourselves into the best and highest mood for the proclamation of the truth. A distinction is sometimes drawn between *mechanical* and *inspirational* preaching; and the so-called inspirational preacher will tell you that his success depends mainly on his environment and the mood of the moment. I venture to suggest that the contrast is not a real one. If by mechanical preaching is meant the most careful and painstaking preparation of the message, if by inspirational preaching is meant that exalted spiritual state in which the preacher's whole personality is alive and vigorous, and in which his best work is done, then I think both these conditions should be fulfilled. This has been the practice of all the great preachers.

Beecher prepared himself for the pulpit by a day of leisure and social companionship on Saturday, and by long communion with God in His Word before entering the pulpit. Spurgeon urged on all his students long, earnest, fervent communion with God in prayer, and enforced his exhortation by citing as examples such men as Joseph Alleine, Brainerd, and Henry Martyn. Sometimes the reading of a devotional book will stimulate the soul and prepare the preacher for his task. Some stirring biography; some heart-searching book like Baxter's

Reformed Pastor, or Wilberforce's *Addresses to Candidates for Ordination*; or an old-world book of devotion like *The Imitation of Christ*, will rouse the flagging zeal and quicken the torpid spirit. Find out what helps you most, and use all the helps you can. Being thus prepared, wait on God in earnest prayer for that spiritual unction and power of the Holy Ghost which is never denied to the true suppliant, and which will give you all that is needed for your noble and awe-inspiring task. Then go forth to fulfil your Master's command, calmly confident that your labour will not be in vain, but that your message will reach the hearts and souls of men. Thus in some measure you will reproduce that picture which John Bunyan's skilful hand has drawn of the pattern preacher: 'This was the fashion of it: it had eyes lifted up to heaven; the best of books in its hands; the law of truth was written on its lips; the world was behind its back; it stood as it pleaded with men, and a crown of gold did hang over its head.'

X

THINGS TO BE AVOIDED

Wearisomeness is the cardinal sin of preaching. It comes from different causes: (1) From want of unity in thought and aim; how one gets tired of jumping about! (2) From confusedness in advancing—like a travelling porpoise, which one is interested in watching for a little, to see where it will come up next; but this soon becomes tiresome. (3) From monotony of thought, the unity of uniform dullness—true unity must have variety. (4) From slowness of progress, showing the long line we have to travel to reach little or nothing, proving what needs no proof, illustrating what is clear as daylight. (5) From undue length in what is interesting. The preacher should remember that we tire of being interested. (6) From obscure ways of putting things, by means of words and phrases that do not reveal, but hide. The intelligent tire of this soonest, and the dull find it out at last.—Dr. John Ker.

X

Things to be Avoided

PERHAPS no greater kindness can be shown to the young man just commencing a preacher's career, than to instil into his mind this fact, that, if ever he is to be an acceptable and successful preacher, there are some things which must be avoided as persistently as the plague. The first, if not the greatest of these, is *inappropriateness*. During a recent summer holiday the writer had a marvellously apt illustration of the way in which a public service may be marred and rendered ineffectual by this fault. The preacher discoursed on the folly and sin of gaining a fortune by fraud and ill-gotten gain, to a congregation made up of artisans and labouring men, to whom life offered no opportunities for this particular evil. The topic selected had no relevance either to their circumstances or their temptations, and could hardly be brought into direct contact with their thoughts or needs. If the preacher

when preparing his sermon, had had a single vision of the members of the congregation to whom that sermon was addressed, they would probably have been spared the infliction of such an exhibition of 'inappropriateness.'

Again, for a preacher to stand in the pulpit on one of the great festival days of the Church—Christmas, Easter, or Whit Sunday—and make no reference to the day, its history and associations, is not merely to miss one of the greatest opportunities for teaching and making emphatic the great facts of our holy religion, but also to stand self-convicted of having failed to find the appropriate lesson and message for the day. No wise preacher will ever be guilty of such a blunder; but will rather study to gain all the help possible by choosing 'acceptable words' and securing always an appropriate subject for such red-letter days of the Church's calendar.

Another fault to be avoided is *using the text as a motto, instead of finding in it* A MESSAGE. Here, also, illustrations might be drawn from experience, but the very frequency of the practice renders it unnecessary. The preacher, in this case, misses altogether the point and message of his text; and catching at one or other of its words or phrases, makes it a pretext for piling together a miscellaneous and sometimes a disorderly array of thoughts and

illustrations gathered from all sources. These may be interesting and even forceful in themselves, but they have no *living relation* to the text, or to each other; and the hearers vaguely wonder what the preacher is driving at. The remedy for this is to discover the real meaning of the text before beginning to shape the sermon, and then to endeavour clearly to expound this meaning, and to impress it on the congregation.

Another fault, sometimes seen in young preachers, lies in an altogether different plane. The theme of the sermon is suitable and correctly based on the text; the outline is more or less orderly and logical; but some of the phrases and illustrations used are inaccurate and misleading. The preacher has studied his subject, has prepared his outline with care; but has been too ambitious in his reading, and has been betrayed into using words and phrases the meaning of which has not been clearly apprehended by his own mind. Scientific illustrations are used which are so definitely inaccurate as to betray the preacher's ignorance of all the newer conceptions and facts of science. This is an easily made mistake, but a very grave one, and needs to be remedied at once. Before the preacher ventures to use what are to him new words, new phrases, new illustrations, let him make sure of their meaning, let him endeavour to under-

stand them clearly himself; and if he has any doubt about the matter, discard them until he has time to study carefully their meaning and relations, and thus make himself able to use them accurately. Wise hearers will excuse simplicity both in style and illustration, but they will sternly and quickly condemn pretentious ignorance.

In quite another direction lies the peril of *sensationalism.* This does not mean that earnestness and enthusiasm which must accompany our message if it is to be adequately presented to the people—such sensationalism is legitimate and commendable; nor the force and brightness which can be gained by a wise use of humour, if the preacher possesses that valuable gift; nor the attempt to show the finger of Providence in the great events of the world, and the more notable movements of national life: all these are amongst the tools and instruments of the messenger from God. It does mean the smart, tricky, and slangy phrases which are only meant to call attention to the preacher's cleverness and up-to-dateness; and that use of public events and of the personal actions of well-known characters which merely serve to advertise his vanity. All this must be resolutely avoided by the preacher who recognizes that he is an ambassador for Christ.

Neither does it mean that the preacher is to be

tongue-tied in face of great and almost overwhelming evils. He is called to be *strong and very courageous*, and in order to this he must consider his attitude towards the demands of men and the customs and conventions of modern days. Is he to prophesy 'smooth things'—to follow the line of least resistance? or is he boldly to attack the evils so prevalent in human nature? In answer to these questions we quote a paragraph from the recently published *Life of Almond of Loretto*, showing the principles which he tried to instil into the boys entrusted to his care. A little thought will translate them into principles for preachers.

'We must not do things because other boys did them. This was (or easily might be) "following a multitude to do evil." We must not do things in a certain way because we have always done them that way before. This was "getting into a groove." We must not think as others thought simply because they thought so. Other people seldom used their heads. We must not mind what other people said of us. "They say—What say they? Let them say." Other people asked what was usual to be done. We must ask what was right and reasonable to be done. Other people conformed and accepted. We must stand out and prove. Other people ignored the light, or were too timid to follow it, in matters of

habit. We must discover the light in matters of habit, and hold it up on high.'

Another thing to be avoided is *prosiness*. By this we do not mean *longwindedness*, or merely lengthy discourse, but that uninterestingness which creates a sense of boredom in the hearers. This arises when the preacher has never been himself interested in his subject, and has not taken the slightest pains to make it interesting to his audience. When people complain of long sermons, they often mean (unconsciously) sermons which lack interest. The preacher's mind was not alert—either when constructing his sermon or when delivering it; and it fails to grip. Here the remedy is obvious. The preacher must do something to rouse his own mind to *attention*; he must find some subject that is full of interest, and even of fascination to himself; must prepare diligently; procure some living illustrations; and then, with his mind full of the subject, even the children will note the improvement in his delivery on his next appearance in the pulpit.

Perhaps no subject is of more pressing and intense interest to the preacher to-day than this of securing the utmost freshness and variety in his utterances. He is assailed on all sides by voices calling him to revise his methods and to invigorate his style; while many of his critics are ready to assert that

the blame for the falling off in attendance at church and chapel must be laid at his door. A reviewer of Mr. Mudie-Smith's book, *The Religious Life of London*, says:

'It seems to us that one thing urgently needed is an altogether different conception of the sermon. The stilted formality of the sermon and its apparently deliberate ignoring of most departments of human life and thought, outside of what is conventionally spiritual, has a vast deal to do with the modern dislike of the sermon. More human interest and more literary charm must be imported into the sermon before the growing prejudice against listening to pulpit discourses is overcome.'

With this verdict we do not altogether agree; the writer, we think, is either ignorant of modern pulpit methods, or he has been betrayed by his very interest in the matter into making a much too general and sweeping condemnation. The pulpit has not so thoroughly lost touch with modern life and thought as is here assumed. There is urgent need, however, for great improvement; and every preacher should carefully scrutinize his own productions, and make an earnest and deliberate effort to get out of the groove of the commonplace and the unattractive.

Probably the only way for the preacher to keep

himself really fresh and interesting in the pulpit is by a deep, intense, and eminently devotional study of the Bible; using all the best helps which are so readily available to-day. Nothing can take the place of this, and nothing will enable the preacher to touch, and move, and help his congregation so much as a wise and intelligent use of Bible teaching and Bible history. It will be found that the most attractive and most successful preachers in the present day are those whose utterances are steeped in, and saturated with, the deep and abiding truths of revelation.

Another peril to which the preacher is perhaps almost unconsciously exposed is that of fashioning all his sermons on one model, of building them all on the same ground-plan. This habit is sure to bring with it monotony of utterance, and in most cases will be fatal to success. A due recognition of the danger will be the best means of avoiding it. The preacher may also learn much by a careful study of the *methods of the modern pulpit.* The religious papers are full of reports of sermons uttered by prominent preachers of the day; books of sermons of all kinds are published in great and increasing numbers; and it is easy to make a fairly varied and comprehensive selection of examples. They can be gathered from many sources, and

the preacher must be either abnormally dull or exceptionally brilliant who cannot find in such a study some new method to enrich and enliven his own style. We think that a wise reading of selected sermons—especially if a careful analysis is made of the discourses, and the various forms of sermon-construction are noted—will help the preacher to avoid this particular peril, and to form a less monotonous and more attractive pulpit style.

XI

EFFECTIVE PREACHING

It is this that makes men great, whatever they be, whether inventors or statesmen—the vision of the future, of possibilities which men cannot yet realize. And especially here lies the greatness of the preacher: in his sensibility to the nearness of something not yet manifest, to a revelation of Christ which is at hand; that, in all he is doing, he feels himself on the marge, on the outskirts, of a great manifestation of Christ, when He shall baptize with the Holy Ghost, and take away the sin of the world. And this is his message still to us. God has come nigh. The Redeemer is here. Receive Him. The kingdom of God is among you; the door is open. Enter in, that you may see the light.—DR. A. B. DAVIDSON.

The secret of success for all our ministers is very largely in the simple charm of concentrating their intellectual force on the work of preaching.—DR. MACLAREN.

XI

Effective Preaching

IN much that is written and said about preaching to-day there is a tacit assumption that the result of a great deal of pulpit work is more or less unsatisfactory. Every preacher worthy of the name desires to see definite and adequate results follow his labours; and when success is either lacking or scanty, the failure is accompanied by depression and unrest. Any discussion which throws light on this failure is always welcome; although it must be confessed that while many complain of the fact, there are few who relieve the difficulty by any helpful suggestions as to its causes and cure. Sometimes, however, a clear recognition of the difficulty we have to face is sufficient to start us on an earnest search for the means of conquering it; and this must be our reason for calling attention to the subject here.

It has been suggested that the true reason for this ineffectiveness is to be found in the decadence of

the pulpit. We are told that it has lost its place in the hearts of men, and its power of influencing the community. The press has, in the eyes of these critics, not only become a rival to the pulpit, but has usurped its influence and power. It would be difficult to prove this to any one who knows anything of modern church life. Watch the crowds thronging the great mission-halls of London and of the provincial cities; the masses congregating wherever a well-known preacher is in the pulpit; and the conclusion will be irresistibly forced upon you that preaching is growing in popularity and power. What is the secret of this power? A modern writer[1] finds it in the sublime truths of which it treats and in the personality of the preacher:

'Among the many things which occupy the mind of man there are some of supreme and never-dying interest: questions which men are always asking and which they never tire of asking. The great problems of human life—its origin, its significance, its destiny—are always with us, though other objects of thought are continually changing. It is because sermons treat of these great problems, because sermons aim at setting forth the greatest truths, the noblest ideals, the highest interests of man,

[1] Rev. W. J. Foxell.

that they find and always will find hearers. But this is not the whole case. It is conceivable that tracts and pamphlets might be printed and distributed, containing the very words which a preacher might have uttered; yet it may be questioned whether they would be read by one in ten of those who now listen to sermons. It is the living voice, the living person, the man. It is this which helps us to understand the influence of the sermon.'

This statement, while suggesting the importance of the preacher's position in modern life, does not solve our difficulty; and we must look at the problem more closely.

The experience of the most successful preachers of modern and bygone days warrants us in saying that, in order to be effective, preaching should be EVANGELISTIC in its character. In a paper recently published in *The Homiletic Review*, Professor Herrick Johnson, of Chicago, discusses the question, 'Why are not more souls saved by preaching?' or, to put the question in its most personal and practical form, 'Why are not my sermons bringing more souls to Christ?' He distinguishes between evangelical and evangelistic preaching; the former being 'soul-building,' and the latter 'soul-rescuing,' preaching. The evangelistic sermon is a true gospel sermon *plus* the purpose of rescue. This type of sermon

is declared to be sadly wanting in the modern American pulpit, and the fact suggests at least a partial answer to the question.

The true reason why no more souls are saved is not found either in the divine purpose or in the present conditions of society; but rather in the way the ordinary preacher treats the duty of preaching evangelistic sermons. This particular part of his work is left for special occasions; or for the evening only; or is merely tacked on as an appendage at the end of the discourse. The Professor asks whether the real cause of this is not due to a secret belief that evangelistic preaching is not quite up to the level of the work of a teaching ministry, and warns his readers that a low estimate here will tell disastrously on the work of rescue. 'You cannot fly a kite as you would fling out a lifeline.'

He strongly urges the restoration of 'rescue preaching' to its rightful position, and suggests that the characteristic traits of such rescue sermons will be—an earnest attempt to convince men of sin, and to reveal their state as lost sinners; urgent appeals for immediate decision coming direct from a heart of compassion; and an expectation of definite results.

With much of this we heartily agree; but we do not think that the Professor has pierced to the

heart of the difficulty. We are frequently hearing complaints, from men who cannot be accused of evading or minimizing the importance of evangelistic preaching, that fervent and urgent appeals do not produce the same effects they did in bygone years. Congregations are reverent, attentive, devout; but are not so responsive to the invitations of the gospel as were the congregations of twenty-five or thirty years ago. Is there any real reason for this? And is that reason to be found in the character of the preaching, or in the altered mood of the congregation? Probably the true answer to this question will be—*in both.*

There is no doubt that a great change has come over pulpit style and utterance during the past generation. Dr. John Watson, in a paper on 'Imperial Preaching,' published in the *British Weekly* only a year or two before his lamented death, draws a fine contrast between the preacher who is at home with the eternal verities and the higher themes of the gospel revelation, and his brother who builds his 'intellectual home amid the circumstances of human life and the interests of his own age.' Both men, he thinks, are doing good work; but the results of the two methods are widely different. The one speaks 'with the indescribable authority of one to whom God has spoken.' The

sermons of the other 'may have quotations from the masters of thought, and may refer at times to the great movements which have made history, but they are certain to be rich in local colour and to show the soil through which they have been running. As one turns over the leaves he catches the name of a living politician, of a popular pressman, of an infamous criminal, of a fashionable novelist; he finds allusions to a scandal in high life, to a controversy between two churches, to the latest attack on Christianity by some dashing free-lance, and to the compensation of publicans. The sermons are charged with the life of to-day, and the hearer is perfectly at home. He understands to the last word what is said to him, and is never taken into the wilderness, where he would be ill at ease; he knows exactly what he ought to do, and it is never any hopeless ideal. This is contemporary rather than eternal preaching, provincial rather than imperial.'

In these sentences Dr. Watson has vividly, and not unkindly, described a great deal of the preaching of to-day; and, with all its attractiveness and power, it does seem to lack the urgency and persuasiveness once characteristic of the Methodist pulpit. While maintaining the freshness of the modern discourse, we must seek to increase its evangelistic power.

In order to this we must go back to the source

of 'the old prophetic fire.' The preacher is the New Testament prophet, and needs the prophet's inspiration. In a fine address on 'The Prophetic Ministry' the Rev. John Wilson says:

'There are three Hebrew words translated by the English word "prophet," two of which signify one who sees, the third, one who speaks and speaks out of the fullness of his heart—spiritual insight and magnetic speech. They were men who saw, and were compelled to give utterance to what they saw.'

The prophet, then, is a *witness*, and his power to witness is based on a true vision and a real experience. It is the man who knows who speaks with certainty and power. His knowledge is born of his own experience, his fellowship with God, and his sympathy with men.

'A prophet cannot keep himself aloof from his message, or from the men to whom he delivers it. He must be "son of man." He cannot but be heartsore if he speaks to human hearts of God's heart. There is a legend of a saint's vision of a band of Franciscan friars standing in heaven around Jesus. Noticing that the lips of each were stained crimson, he asked the meaning of it, and the Lord replied: "These are the great preachers of My Cross; for the story of My redeeming love only

comes with power over lips that are red with My precious blood."'[1]

But the change has not been confined to the pulpit. The preacher has to face the altered conditions of modern life and thought, and these are possibly deeper and wider than we sometimes imagine. With much diffidence the writer ventures to suggest that the greatest problems will be found to be closely connected with a series of facts to which attention has been called by some close observers of contemporary life and thought. These include (*a*) a new, and in many respects a nobler conception of the character of God; (*b*) a greater control of the emotions, especially as these are concerned with religion; and (*c*) a strong hesitation to commit oneself to the demands of the highest and most heroic life.

(*a*) The modern emphasis placed upon the doctrine of 'The Fatherhood of God' is good and commendable, and is one great step toward giving to the people truer and nobler ideas of biblical theology, and of the character of God; but with it, if not because of it, there has come a lax view of the Sovereignty of God, a less profound sense of the heinousness and guilt of sin, and a less acute recognition of the danger of the unsaved.

[1] Rev. H. Elvet Lewis.

Our business is to counteract these tendencies, and to formulate such a true and full conception of the character of God and His relation to man as shall produce a victorious and aggressive type of Christianity amongst our church members.

(*b*) There are few preachers to-day who do not mourn over the difficulty of leading men and women to decision. Many deplore the hardness and unresponsiveness of modern congregations. We have to face an emotionally new type of character—to recognize that most of our hearers can and will successfully hide their feelings even when conviction is deep, and that desperate assaults must be made both on the conscience and will before any act of decision can take place. Here the problem is—to discover how best to meet this altered state of things; to find an instrument able to reach and to reinforce the powers of conscience and volition.

(*c*) Further, there is on the part of many devout persons a hesitancy to take the side of the most heroic life. The Christian claim is seen to cut across many habits, desires, and inclinations; and the inducements to surrender these things are not powerful enough to move our hearers to choose and follow the noblest ideal. They listen to the Saviour's call; they recognize the dignity and the transcendent value of the Christ-centred, as compared

with the self-centred, life; but are not willing to take the decisive action needed to start them on the new career. And the preacher's task is to find the true method of energizing these reluctant souls, and transforming them into enthusiasts for righteousness and for Christ.

Where can the remedy be found? Where can the needed wisdom and power be gained for the pulpit? Are we not thrown back upon the Saviour's own promise?—'Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you' (Acts i. 8). See also John xiv. 17–26; xv. 5; xvi. 7, 13, 14. Is it not our first duty to restudy and restate for ourselves the great doctrine of the Life-giving Spirit as taught in the New Testament; and so to experience His power, and to receive His wisdom, in our own hearts, that we may become 'mighty to the pulling down of strongholds' and to the upbuilding of the Church of God?

XII

THE SOURCE OF THE PREACHER'S POWER

As when a sunbeam falls on bright or transparent bodies they themselves become brilliant too, and shed forth a fresh brightness from themselves, so souls wherein the Spirit dwells, illuminated by the Spirit, themselves become spiritual and send forth their grace to others.—St. Basil.

What is reason, but a partaking of the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world? What is poetry, but the burning of the heart when He is near? What is art, but the striving to recollect His lineaments? What is history, but the traces of His iron rod or His Shepherd's staff?

Meditation on Him, prayer to Him, learning of Him, conformity to Him, partaking of Him, are the chief business of the Christian life.

Rev. C. Marriott.

XII

The Source of the Preacher's Power

IN His last great conversation with His disciples, Jesus is portrayed as saying, 'He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit; for apart from Me ye can do nothing.' These words voice for us clearly and distinctly the true condition of success in spiritual work; and indicate in the most definite manner the need for vital contact and continuous communion with our Lord and Master, if the springs of activity are not to be exhausted at their very centre.

We are face to face to-day with some of the most difficult problems which the Church has ever been called to solve, and need to consider our position and to estimate our resources if we would be properly prepared to meet them. Possession of the power which comes from Christ will alone enable us to do this satisfactorily; and in order to secure this power we need to understand, to appreciate, and to possess those great blessings which He promised His disciples

that they might be adequately equipped for their great tasks. Only as we possess these, as we are in living communion with the Lord of all power and might, shall we be able to fulfil our appointed duty.

The preacher, at least, can never forget that every member of the body of Christ, every individual Christian, was meant to serve a great purpose—to bring forth fruit. We are redeemed for service. This was frequently pointed out by the Master Himself. 'I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide'; 'Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples.' The condition of fruitlessness indicates a wrong or a faulty relation to Christ. A withered branch is useless; and unless vitality and fruitfulness be restored, complete severance from the Living Vine must follow (John xv. 6).

Fruitfulness depends on our relation to Christ Himself. Apart from Him we are inefficient and useless in the kingdom of God. The purpose of our life thus stands revealed—we are to bear fruit. This is one of the real tests of our religion, and is so regarded by the world. We cannot fail to recognize the ever-growing demands made by the world on the Church—demands which summon all engaged in the work of preaching to an ever fuller and more strenuous life.

1. The standard of spiritual life is set higher to-day. We have come to see that salvation involves more than safety; it includes service for God and humanity. The attainments which satisfied men in earlier days no longer suffice; the conscience itself demands a higher and nobler method of life.

We may trace some of the stages of this growth in the record of revelation. The regular and stated worship of the patriarchal age grows into a tender and more intimate communion with God in the experience of the psalmist; and this again expands into the demand (first fully formulated by Christ) for service—service on the lines and up to the level of sacrifice. A similar tendency is seen in history. The formalism of the seventeenth century in England was displaced by the vigorous evangelism of the eighteenth, and this in turn has been followed by the more recent demand for an ethical revival. If the line of demarcation cannot always be clearly drawn, the trend of thought can be easily traced. Three elements indeed must be combined to produce the fruit of real religion. There must be regular and stated worship; free, full, and frequent communion with God; and that righteousness of life which is at once the test and fruit of a really effective Christianity.

2. The demands on the Church's activity have also

increased. There has been an enormous growth in the demand for aggressive enterprise and missionary zeal; new claims have arisen with marvellous rapidity; the Church is asked to contribute its solution to the great social and industrial problems of the day; and fields which a few years ago were regarded as altogether outside the Church's sphere are now looked upon as part of her long-neglected work.

The demands made for the establishment of great central missions; for some movement to counteract and cure the indifference to religion manifested by so large a portion of the community; for some solution of the problems connected with the question of workmen's dwellings, education, war, trade, and industrial disputes, &c.; for help to meet the doubts and difficulties arising from the new, startling, and sometimes materialistic conceptions of the universe and of life,—all are evidence of the new calls upon the resources of the Church and the ministry.

In addition to this we are surrounded with a new intellectual atmosphere; there is a new spirit in the pew, old shibboleths are no longer potent; the old orthodoxy, especially if arrayed in the old terms, is no longer allowed to pass unchallenged; the most vital and permanent theological conceptions have to be reformulated and translated into the terms of modern

speech if they are to be instinct with life and power for our hearers.

Thus, leaving out of account all exaggerated demands, the claims made are great and urgent; is it not our duty to consider how these claims can be met? Have we found power to meet these increasing demands? We are not powerless—the constant growth of the influence and power of the churches and of the pulpit is sufficient evidence of this. The question, however, remains, Are we fully equal to our task? Have we sought and found an increase of power sufficient to meet the added responsibility?

Two or three things must be noted and kept in mind.

(*a*) Activity is never greater than the force behind it. Service rests on power. If you require an increased output from the factory, you must increase the supply of labour; a constant addition to the working machinery means an ever-increasing demand on the engine-room. So in the spiritual life. If the supply of power is not maintained, we become weak and helpless, and may find by sad experience the truth of the Master's words: 'Apart from Me ye can do nothing.'

(*b*) Where the force declines, activity lessens. When the boilers of a steamship are unable to generate a sufficient supply of steam, the liner soon gets into

the 'overdue' list. So, when communion with Christ is allowed to grow feeble, or to lapse, the central forces of the spiritual life fail, and character degenerates. There can be no really effective work where the fires of worship, of communion with God, are allowed to die out. Even praying, it is said, is more effective when, of five minutes spent in the exercise, three are given to silent communion with God, and two to actual petition.

(*c*) For increased activity, increased force is necessary. The church and the minister both need a constant and uninterrupted supply of power. We cannot live on yesterday's food, nor on last year's experience. 'The mill can never grind with the water that is past,' and we cannot do the work demanded and expected of us unless we are in constant communion with the great source of all spiritual power.

Have we sought and obtained that full supply which we need and which is promised to us? In one of his books Isaac Taylor throws out the suggestion that although our conception and interpretation of Christianity may be very good—good for our own peace, for guiding us in daily life, and enabling us to meet death with, at least, composure—it is yet ill-adapted for conquest and for triumph. May not this point to one of the secrets of our small success

in the battle with worldliness and indifference to-day? 'Spiritual enterprises require for their achievement spiritual conditions of the very highest force.' Can we flatter ourselves that we possess these conditions? Have we that intense conviction, that enthusiastic zeal, that utter and absolute reliance upon the Holy Spirit, which, if fully ours, will make us ready 'for triumph and for conquest'? And if not, how are we to gain it?

We must go back to the great sources of power. With opened and attentive ear we must listen to the great inspiring promises of our Master, and endeavour to realize their fulfilment in our own experience. The words are familiar—perhaps too familiar to bear their full message to our souls—'I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth'; 'He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you'; 'He shall guide you into all the truth'; 'He shall declare unto you the things that are to come'; 'Ye shall receive power when the Holy Ghost is come upon you'—have we got at the facts behind the words? Are we in vital communion with this 'Lord and Giver of life,' with this fountain of grace and power?

Shall we concentrate our attention on these great

words? They have a meaning for the Church in its corporate life; and a careful study of the earlier pages of the Acts of the Apostles will reveal much of that meaning. They have a meaning for the individual Christian; and a study of St. Paul's writings will show us how full, rich, and inexhaustible is the treasure there stored for us. But we ask more particularly to-day, What is their meaning for those who are called to preach the gospel of Christ? What did the Master promise to those who sustain this special relation to Him? And while we repudiate all that savours of sacerdotalism, all interpretations that would suggest the possession of a monopoly of grace, or of unique 'supplies of power mechanically and officially transmitted,' we must, I think, admit that Christ intended to furnish those called to these greater opportunities and responsibilities with full and rich supplies of appropriate and effective grace. 'While scorning the idea of Simon the sorcerer that we may make ourselves masters of this power, we need to realize with Peter that this divine power is our master, and master of all the world beside. No portion of the power can be detached and appropriated so as to be at the disposal of one man, or of one set of men, or be affected by the uttering of words or the moving of hands,' yet the Spirit Himself, who is power and life and love, is given

to Christ's ministering servants for teaching, for guidance, and for effective service.

Does not this promise mean, in the words of a recent writer, that 'the Holy Spirit, rooted in the very heart of our personality, should send out His forces through all the regions in which personality acts—in will, or in emotion, or in intellect; should make prayer the utterance of a son's heart asking to know his Father's will, and setting himself to do it; should help us to watch the tendencies of the facts of life and try to mould them to our Father's purpose'; and in all things to be the perfect children of our Father?

The Holy Spirit is our Teacher. 'He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you.' WE are the disciples of Jesus, and He is still our Teacher through the Spirit. Is it not possible to discover some of His methods? Does He not teach us through our study of the Word—'opening our minds' as He 'opens to us the Scriptures,' as He did for the disciples during the forty days? Does He not teach us—the preacher and the layman—through 'fellowship,' by the converse of heart with heart and mind with mind, as He taught Paul and Peter and Apollos, in the Pentecostal periods —widening our thought, broadening our sympathy, leading us ever onward? Does He not still use

the method of experience—teaching us by the facts of daily life—that method of which so many examples are found in the 'Acts'—by persecution, by the needs of men and of nations? Is He not with us by His Spirit to-day, that we may learn the lessons of the events of history and mould our teaching to meet the deepest and most pressing of the spiritual needs of our hearers? And His great lesson is always the same—that we 'may learn Christ,' that we 'may know Christ,' that all 'the treasures of wisdom and knowledge' stored in Him may be at our disposal, in our service as His ministers. And what He is to us, He is, to some extent at least, to our hearers. It has been truly said: 'One secret of effective preaching is the conviction that there is a word of God speaking in every heart; and he who can show that man has always heard this word has the power of hushing the clamour of external voices, so that every man may listen for that inner voice in his own. Such a one unveils, reveals, the divine within his hearers, and thus helps to transform life.'

The Holy Spirit is our guide. 'He shall guide you into all the truth.' How full and unlimited the promise here! we need place no barriers where He has imposed no limits. He will guide us into the truth in our public utterances, in our administra-

tion of the affairs of His Church, in our attempts to improve organization and method, in our perplexities and difficulties; sometimes perhaps by closing the door to our precipitate impulses; more frequently by guiding us to open doors for labour and service. If we seek and follow His guidance we shall be led into no paths of luxurious ease, of scanty ideals, of narrow intolerance; but to arduous service and noble achievement, to sacrifice and to victory. And this guidance is always to Christ the Truth—or, as He appeared to the apostle in Patmos, Christ the Conqueror, the Satisfier, the Opener of the sealed book, and the Solver of spiritual perplexities.

The Holy Spirit is the source of our power. 'Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you.' One dare hardly venture to interpret a word so rich and fateful as this word 'power.' It is the thing we most covet, the fulfilment of our utmost need. Yet may we not say that it includes all and more than is contained in the former promises; power for ready and forceful utterance, power to devise and carry out plans for wider and nobler service, and power to live the life of the Spirit-filled and the Spirit-led disciple?

To receive new and larger power in my personal life—what a boon! To enrich personality! This

personality of the preacher—how much it counts for, how little do we sometimes regard it! How much it needs this reinforcement! When our lives are so transparent, so pure, so saintly—in a word, so fully Spirit-filled—that men cannot fail to recognize that beyond and above all else we are 'men of God,' then our words will acquire a force and influence they can reach by no other method. It has been said that 'the best help which a grown-up man can give to a grown-up man is always the example of his own life kept true to his own ideals.' For this, and for every other spiritual task, we need the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

These are some of the gifts offered to us by our Master. They can be ours, in our possession, if we pay the price for them. The price is—submission, obedience, transmission. We must submit absolutely to the Holy Spirit, who is with us, and dwells in us; His suggestions, His commands must be fully followed and implicitly obeyed; and the power He supplies must be used for the extension of the kingdom of God and of Christ. However great our present attainments, our experience of the Spirit-filled life, may be—our freedom from bondage, our assurance of pardon, our gladness and joy in the indwelling Christ—we may all unite in seeking this

reinforcement of power, this equipment of the Spirit for conquest and victory.

Let us make this our purpose, remembering that for every preacher the poet's words are true:

> Thou hast thy way to go, thou hast thy day
> To live; thou hast the need of thee to make
> In the hearts of others; do thy thing; yes, slake
> *The world's great thirst for yet another man.*
> And be thou sure of this: no other can
> Do for thee that appointed thee of God.

XIII

THE ART OF PERSUASION

Speech, Style, Persuasion

The magnetic quality, if one may so define it, has been possessed by all the great revivalist preachers. Whitefield in particular exercised it in an extraordinary way. Gladstone had it; the mere flash of his eye made men leap to their feet. I have read that O'Connell exercised his amazing influence on men who could not catch distinctly a single word he said. It was as if his gestures and his tones accomplished what he willed. . . . But while I grant the existence of this physical magnetism, I deny that it is ever separated from other qualities. By itself it would be nothing. Unless there go with it conviction, a message, the power of clothing that message in words, no permanent result is achieved.

'CLAUDIUS CLEAR.'

XIII

The Art of Persuasion

Speech, Style, Persuasion

ONE of the primary qualifications of a good preacher is that he shall be able to speak well. A good speaker is not always or necessarily a good preacher. Preaching to be excellent requires additional and special qualities. But unless he can speak well the preacher lacks one of the great essentials of his art, and can never hope to excel. While it is probably true that speaking, like swimming, can only be learned by experience and constant practice, it is also true that careful teaching can help the beginner greatly by showing him what to avoid and by pointing out the path to real excellence. The earnest student is willing to learn from all sources, especially from those who have made a study of 'speaking as an art,' and will be specially thankful for any light upon the 'art of persuasion.'

For our great object is 'to persuade men'; and

this is a task of such tremendous difficulty that we are ready to listen to any one who is willing to expound its principles or illustrate its practice. Few have been bold enough to describe or analyse this difficult art. The present writer is conscious that he has no equipment or qualification to enable him to fill this gap in our homiletical literature. But something ought to be said concerning the matter, and he ventures therefore to reproduce, mainly in his own words, some counsels and maxims from an almost forgotten essay upon the subject, believing that in this way his purpose of giving all possible help to the younger portion of his readers may be best accomplished.

The volume in question comes from the once celebrated school of Port Royal, and is entitled *The Art of Speaking*[1]; it discusses at considerable length three main topics—*Speech*, *Style*, *Persuasion*.

The author commences by showing that Speech is the foundation of all discourse. We may speak with our eyes and fingers, but if we were confined to these, speech would be both imperfect and troublesome. We can make many and very diversified sounds easily with the tongue; and nature has taught men

[1] '*The Art of Speaking*,' *written in French by Messieurs du Port Royal, in pursuance of a former treatise intituled* '*The Art of Thinking*.' *Rendered into English* (1676).

to use the organs of voice for communion with their fellows. *Speech* is defined as 'a composition of sounds of the voice, by men established, to be the signs of their thoughts, and having the power to awaken the "ideas" to which they have annexed them.'

The actual sound produced in speaking a word is called its *body*, but the idea it conveys is its *soul*; and of the two the soul is the more important.

Before starting to speak it is necessary to form a scheme in our minds of what we ought and intend to say, just as the painter forms his design in his imagination before he paints. 'Discourse is the picture of our thoughts, the tongue is the pencil which draws that picture, and words are the colours. We ought therefore in the first place to range our thoughts, and put such things as we intend to represent by our words into natural order, disposing them so that the knowledge of some few of them may render the rest more easy and intelligible to the reader.' In order to do this there must be *careful meditation* on the subject, an endeavour to gain *the fullest knowledge* concerning it, and a determination *to forget nothing* that will help to make it clear to our hearers. Having thus collected our materials, they must be carefully reviewed and condensed; for brevity will make the discourse neat and compact.

Our author believes that a good practical knowledge of grammar is the foundation of excellence in speech; but his discussion of this, though interesting to the student of ancient rhetoric, is too antiquated for to-day, the modern teacher being a better and safer guide. Still, many of his maxims are worth remembering. We summarize the principal points:

Unless all the principal ideas formed in the mind are expressed, discourse is imperfect. It is a mistake to dilate on trifling things, emphasis must be put on the *weightier ideas* connected with our subject.

All *superfluous* words make the discourse obscure.

Words should be *well placed* for clearness and for emphasis; 'the faculty of well arranging words makes and marks the orator.'

The customary use of words should be maintained, or confusion arises—words are 'signs of those ideas to which they have been formerly joined.' There is a good and a bad custom of using words, and 'as good men are the properest examples to those who desire to live well, so the practice of good speakers is the fittest rule for those who would speak well.' To distinguish the good from the bad, the effective from the non-effective use of words, we should carefully observe those who speak

well; should train our reason to discriminate and appreciate the good, and study the analogies of the language.

Words must be used only in their *proper significance* if we wish to attain clearness and definiteness in style. Only evil and confusion can result from using fine words and phrases without the requisite knowledge to employ them accurately.

'Some people fancy themselves eloquent if they can but throng their memories with phrases, huddled together out of the works of such persons as are renowned for their eloquence; but they are mistaken, and those who take that course shall never be exact. They accommodate their matter to their phrase, without considering in what place, or upon what occasion it was used by the author. So that their style becomes wild and extravagant, like a grotesque picture patched up of shells of a thousand several colours, and other whimsies that have not the least natural relation to the figure represented.'

Purity is to be distinguished from *clearness* of style. A pure style depends on the right choice of words and their correct use as to meaning; a clear style depends on the arrangement of the words, so that they make a distinct and clear impression on the hearer. While for elegance of style it is necessary to take pains, to use art and felicity in securing

rich and ingenious expressions to convey our thoughts.

The nature and use of rhetorical figures is next discussed. As no language is rich enough to supply terms capable of 'expressing all the different faces upon which the same thing may be represented,' we must have recourse to tropes and metaphors. The principal forms of these are described and discussed with some skill; here we are mainly concerned with their practical use.

Tropes or metaphors should only be used when it is impossible to express our thoughts perfectly without them. They must always possess two qualities—clearness and appropriateness. In order to be clear they should be taken from *sensible* things, i.e. such as are within our knowledge and easily understood. If they are based on remote things they give no help to the hearers. They must be appropriate, the connexion between the idea and the trope should be natural, or if artificial such a connexion as is customary. They must not be used too frequently, or the discourse will be obscure.

The use of figures is *necessary* for many reasons. They help to express our meaning. They ornament discourse, and tend to brevity. They are the language of the passions, give life and animation to speech, help to display our feelings, and really serve as arms

for the mind. They are also *useful* to the orator. They tend to arouse attention, to impress the argument, to illustrate obscure truth, and to emphasize the appeal. But they must be used wisely. 'The style of an orator who makes ill use of his figures is termed a cold style, because whatever effort he makes to animate his auditors, they hearken but coldly, and that coldness is so much the greater because the hearers are not animated by any of those emotions which he desired to excite.'

The sounds and letters of which words are composed should be carefully studied, so that in arranging his words the speaker should be able to provide sounds which are agreeable, distinct, orderly, and varied. Sentences must be easy to pronounce and not too long, and the frequent repetition of the same sounds or terminations of words should be avoided. *The ear must be helped to listen with delight.*

Style

Style is the particular and peculiar method by which a man in expressing his thoughts puts upon it the mark of his own personality.

'*Style*, in its primitive signification, is taken for a kind of bodkin wherewith the ancients writ upon bark and little tables covered with wax. To say who is the author of such a writing, we say 'tis such a

man's hand, whereas the ancients said it was such a man's style. In process of time the word *style* came to be applied only to the manner of expressing.'

As to the characteristic of style—'some are diffuse, and, though they pretend to be succinct, half their words may be retrenched without prejudice to the sense; others are dry, flat, barren, and what effort soever they may make to beautify and adorn things, they leave them half-naked. The style of some is strong, in others it is weak and languishing; in some it is rugged, in others it is smooth. In a word, as faces are different, so are the ways of writing, and it is the cause of this difference of which we are going to inquire.'

Qualities of style depend on the qualities of the imagination, memory, and judgement of the speaker. The form, the clearness, the good order of our ideas depend upon the clearness and distinction of the impressions which the objects make upon us, hence the value of a good imagination and memory. These enable us to see clearly and to retain vividly the impressions made upon our mind and brain.

In order to cultivate a good style we should remember that a well-furnished memory helps the imagination, and that memory is strengthened only by exercise. In addition the qualities necessary for

eloquence are three: (1) power to discover all that may be said on the subject under discussion; (2) a sagacious vivacity that penetrates to the very heart and intricacies of a subject; and (3) exactness of judgement, which guides and regulates the other qualities—invention, penetration, discrimination.

Style is affected by *climate* (or, as we should say, by *racial characteristics*) and by the age in which the speaker lives. But it is the *matter* of which we treat which ought to determine our style; to treat of trifles in a lofty and inflated manner is to be guilty of a grave fault, while the extravagance of the language more fully exposes the poverty of the speaker's mind. The qualities most to be desired are, easiness, strength, appropriateness, and beauty. Beauty is the flower of health, and flowers are the beauty of discourse.

Great orators use only such expressions as put value and emphasis upon their arguments. 'A discourse is beautiful when it is composed according to the rules of art; it is great when it is more than ordinary perspicuous, when there is not one equivocation, no sentence unintelligible, no expression ambiguous; when it is well disposed, and the mind of the reader led directly to the end of the design without the *remora* or impediment of impertinent words.'

Concerning illustrations our author makes some wise and pertinent remarks: 'Ornaments in discourse, like ornaments in nature, have this property; they are both pleasant and profitable. . . .'

'Pillars are the principal ornaments of building; their beauty is linked so straitly with the solidity of the work that the pillars cannot be pulled down without destruction of the whole house. The ornaments of a good discourse are also inseparable.'

He counsels us to use them in the *right time and place*, with *accuracy*, so that they *serve a good purpose*, and not *too freely*. If we ask where they are to be found, our author replies: 'Those who have read much are to imitate the bee, which digests what it has sucked from the flowers and turns all into honey.'

His advice to preachers touches us more closely: 'Those who profess divinity and would instruct others must, as much as in them lies, imitate their great Master Christ Jesus, who convinced the understanding, wrought upon the will, and inflamed the heart of His disciples whilst He taught them. It was this divine fire that He kindled in their minds that the disciples acknowledged. . . . When the heart is on fire the words that come from it must of necessity be ardent.'

Persuasion

Here we come to the crux of the whole question. Our author if he does not greatly illuminate the subject may set us thinking about it, and help us in our practice of the art. He draws a distinction between the two parts of rhetoric—speaking and persuading. Not every man that speaks well can convince those of contrary opinion and bring them over to his side. To persuade means 'to bring people to our sentiments that were of a contrary sentiment before.' In order to do this we must start with a good equipment—orderly methods of thought, choice arrangement of words, and an active and retentive memory. In order to change the opinions of those who are perverse in their inclinations, and prepossessed by passions, reason is too weak, and we must make use of cunning. We must study the humours and inclinations of our hearers to gain influence over them, and infuse such emotions into them as shall compel them to our side.

'The masters in that art have owned three ways of persuading—arguments, manners, and passion. They teach that to persuade we must find proofs, we must deliver ourselves so as to work upon the inclinations of him we would gain, or excite such passion in his mind as may dispose him to our party.'

One great help will be found in a CLEAR style. 'Clearness is the character of truth'; when truth is in the highest degree evident, the most obstinate must submit to conviction. But sometimes we turn our faces and *will not* see the clearness of such truths as offend us. Then we can only be persuaded by other means.

Fullness of knowledge ought not to be despised. To be a *complete orator* a man ought to be universally well-read and ignorant of nothing. Not otherwise will he be able to speak well on any and every subject. 'A man indeed is not perfectly capable of arguing, but when he understands his subject to the bottom.' This can only come from serious study and meditation. 'Knowledge is a fruit environed with thorns that keep most men at a distance; so that if it were not lawful to speak of anything but what we know, the most part of those who make oratory their profession would be obliged to hold their peace.'

Fullness of knowledge is not necessarily the accompaniment of mere fluency, such fluency as might arise from the 'easy ways' (common places)[1] of the ancient rhetoricians. The confusion of these is one of the dangers to which indifferently educated speakers are exposed, and leads to what

[1] These were question-helps for the accumulation of materials.

may be called '*an art of discoursing without judgement of things we do not understand.*' This, at least, is not the method of *persuasion.*

The ancient rhetoricians placed the art of persuading in 'the knowledge how to instruct, how to incline, and how to move an audience—*docere, flectere, movere*'; but it must never be forgotten that excellence comes only from long and assiduous practice, and is the fruit of experience and of continued observation of the manner in which men act and govern themselves.

One essential in the exercise of the art is to gain the goodwill of our hearers. We may say anything to those who are convinced we love them; while modesty and the suppression of all signs of seeking for applause will help to commend our arguments even to opponents. Where prejudice is absent we need have little fear of opposition; it is when we oppose the inclinations of men that we must display our greatest skill and tact, and use every means at our disposal to incline them to receive our ideas and change their thoughts and ways. Care must be taken, however, to show that these qualities are not counterfeit but real.

Further, the orator must be animated, and his speech vigorous and forceful, if he intends to move men; a flame must be kindled in his own heart

if he is to kindle the same fire in the hearts of others. Lethargy and coldness in the speaker will be reflected in those who listen to him.

Curiously enough, the words 'appeal' and 'application' are rarely, if ever, mentioned throughout the argument; but enough has been quoted to show that our author had a real appreciation of the value and importance of 'application,' especially in relation to the preacher's work.

It must be confessed that little light has been thrown upon the working of the secret forces of this great and difficult art. The reader will probably come to the conclusion that the 'art of persuasion' is one little understood either by ancient or modern teachers. We are all sure that it is the highest and crowning excellence of the preacher's task. He is preaching for a verdict, and in order to fulfil his mission he *must* persuade men. Dr. T. Guthrie said long ago: 'In every discourse the preacher should aim at proving, painting, and persuading; in other words, addressing the reason, the fancy, the heart.' Dr. J. H. Jowett in his recent Yale Lectures emphasizes the same truth. He says: 'We are not in the pulpit to please the fancy. We are not there even to inform the mind, or to disturb the emotions, or to sway the judgement. These are only preparatives along the journey. Our ulti-

mate object is to move the will, to set it in another course, to increase its pace, and to make it sing "in the ways of God's commandments."'

This is good, useful, convincing, but does not lead us much nearer to the understanding of the secrets of the 'art of persuasion.' And we ask again, What is its secret? Can that secret be defined, explained, transmitted? Perhaps, in the deeper sense in which we use the word, '*persuasion*' can never be reduced to rules or produced to order.

Some of its elements we may discover; if we are to persuade men, we must live and speak by the power of the 'Indwelling Christ.' We must possess *intelligent sympathy*, must understand the sins, the needs, and the deep yearnings of our fellow-men. We must have *authoritative convictions*. 'Nothing that is anonymous will preach; nothing that is dead and gone; nothing even which is of yesterday, however religious in itself or useful. Thought and word must issue fresh, as from the preacher's mouth so from his breast, if they are to be "spirit and life" to the hearts of his hearers.'[1] The speaker will need also to be supported by the *intense and vitalizing prayers* of the congregation of the faithful. A quotation from Mr. Cornaby's recent volume[2] will

[1] J. H. Newman.
[2] *Prayer and the Human Problem.*

illustrate the value of this. 'Starting with a common devotion to a living Christ, and a common glow of His spiritual presence, after the Ascension—two elements in the initial stage of preparedness which must be gained by every band of Christians who desire to glorify God on earth—there was such prayer and supplication in common, such united waiting upon the unifying Presence, that in the end a hundred souls became as one great soul, and the God of all power and might found scope within and around that band. They had joined their forces of ardent receptivity, and Omnipotence gained a royal welcome in their midst. And who can doubt that, given a like preparedness among any modern hundred or more disciples of Christ, the King of Glory will come in, with all His train, through the uplifted gates, into His living home, and work wonders of regal power from thence?' Further, the persuasive preacher must be dowered and *filled with the power of the Holy Ghost.* This is the final secret; nothing will compensate for the lack of this; nothing can be substituted for it. Armed with this power, and prepared by the possession of other necessary qualifications, the preacher may go forth with confidence and joy, knowing that 'the pleasure of the Lord will prosper in his hand,' that rich results will follow his labours and rejoice his heart.

APPENDIX

I advise you to read every book on preaching that you can buy or borrow, whether it is old or new, Catholic or Protestant, English, French, or German. Learn on what principles the great preachers of other Churches as well as of your own, of other countries as well as of your own, of ancient as well as of modern times, have done their work. If your experience corresponds with mine, the dullest and most tedious writer on this subject will remind you of some fault that you are committing habitually, or of some element of power which you have failed to use. – Dr. R. W. DALE.

APPENDIX

The Preacher's Homiletic Library

THE student desirous of continuing his studies in Homiletics need not be hampered by any difficulty in finding teachers. Few departments of modern religious literature have been so freely enriched in recent years; and difficulty will arise in trying to secure the best amongst such a multiplicity of guides.

Thirty or forty years ago books dealing with our subject were comparatively few, and not too attractive; to-day the homiletic shelves of the preacher's library are richly stored. There is an *older* literature, beginning with St. Chrysostom's *De Sacerdotio* and St. Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana*, which is worthy of attention even yet; but of these the writer has no first-hand knowledge. For an account of these and some later mediaeval and scholastic treatises the reader is referred to the list printed as an appendix in Dr. Kidder's *Homiletics*. The same writer gives also a list of eighteenth and early nineteenth century books; but few of these are likely to tempt readers to-day. In the more recent literature the homiletical student will find his greatest helps, although some skill and knowledge is necessary to make a good selection for his purpose. The following list makes no claim to be complete, though the author believes that he has included the most valuable

and noteworthy of our English books on this great subject. A brief description is appended to those volumes which in his judgement are likely to be most useful to the young preacher.

1. Books on Preaching

Nine Lectures on Preaching (R W Dale). One of the freshest volumes in the valuab e series of Yale Lectures; full of instruction and stimulus, and written in a vivid and fascinating style.

Lectures on Preaching (Bp. Phillips Brooks). A most useful and instructive volume. The author was the ablest and most popular preacher of his day in the American Episcopal Church; his lectures are full of wise counsels based on a wide experience, and will repay careful study.

Lectures on Preaching, Series 1, 2, and 3 (Henry Ward Beecher). These lectures are really familiar talks on preaching, and possess all the characteristics of Mr. Beecher's writings; they are full of interest and inspiration.

The Theory of Preaching (Austin Phelps). Valuable for its careful and thorough analysis of the various elements of the sermon. Not quite such easy reading as some of the volumes mentioned, but of great value to the student who wishes to get full and accurate knowledge of the primary elements of the art of sermon construction.

Lectures to my Students, 1st and 2nd Series (C. H. Spurgeon). These lectures are too well known to need description; they are racy, interesting, helpful, full of common sense.

For the Work of the Ministry (W. G. Blaikie). Earnest, able, comprehensive, and useful.

Homiletic: Lectures on Preaching (Dr. Christlieb). A scholarly, comprehensive, and able book; written for German students, and therefore differing in many points from our English teachers, but well worth study.

Homiletics (Prof. James M. Hoppin). One of the bulkiest volumes, and covering a wide field. The author deals with the History of Preaching, Homiletics, and Rhetoric applied to Preaching. Able, comprehensive, full of instruction.

Ad Clerum (Joseph Parker). A product of Dr. Parker's earlier days, and written in his own peculiar style. Full of interest, and will repay careful reading.

The Christian Minister and his Duties (J. Oswald Dykes, M.A., D.D.). A comprehensive treatise, written with full knowledge and from long experience of the supremely important work of the preacher. Will be found stimulating, instructive, and helpful.

The Preacher, His Life and Work (J. H. Jowett, D.D.). Fresh and vigorous, full of inspiring and practical suggestions from a great preacher's experience. One of the freshest recent books on our subject.

The Work of the Ministry (W. H. Griffith Thomas, D.D.). A very comprehensive volume, containing a series of lectures delivered to ministerial students of the Church of England. Full of practical counsel. Some of the lectures will appeal *only* to members of the Church of England.

The Ideal Ministry (Herrick Johnson, D.D.). A portly volume, discussing the subject of preaching from the standpoint of the ideal. Urges the importance of the preacher's task.

The Minister at Work (A. Benvie, B.D.). Useful and practical: an exposition of the practical aspects of the Christian ministry.

A Guide to Preachers (A. E. Garvie). Professor Garvie has collected in this volume the outlines of four series of lectures delivered to a class of lay preachers during the years 1904-6, and published week by week in *The Examiner*. The topics treated are: (1) 'How to Study the Bible'; (2) 'How to State the Gospel'; (3) 'How to Preach'; (4) 'How to Meet the Age.' It is obvious, therefore, that this *Guide to Preachers* covers considerably more ground than the ordinary text-books of Homiletics; and that while something is gained by a survey of the wider field, the gain is counterbalanced by the comparatively small space which is allotted to the special task of 'preaching.'

In the main, the book is true to its aim; and will be exceedingly useful to the large army of lay preachers who have neither the time nor the knowledge necessary for a wider and fuller study of the topics discussed.

Positive Preaching and Modern Mind (Principal Forsyth). A very able volume, dealing with the preacher's *message* rather than with his *methods*. This message is to be found in the Gospel of Grace, a gospel which is 'more than either Bible, Church, or Christianity. It *is* Christianity.' Dr. Forsyth's aim is to bring back the accent of certainty into the preacher's message. He deals with the great evangelical principles in the light of modern thought.

One of the freshest and most interesting volumes we have read for some time is *The Christian Ministry*, by Dr. Lyman Abbott. Written from the modern standpoint, the author treats with great ability and power the following

topics: 'The Fundamental Faiths of the Ministry,' 'The Function of the Ministry,' 'The Individual Message of the Ministry,' 'The Social Message of the Ministry,' 'The Minister as Priest,' 'Qualifications for the Ministry,' 'Some Ministers of the Olden Time,' 'The Ministry of Jesus Christ: His Methods and the Substance of His Teaching.' These discussions touch many of the greatest of the problems confronting the preacher to-day, and no earnest and careful student should neglect the volume. It is emphatically a book to read.

Lectures on Homiletics and Preaching (Ebenezer Porter, of Andover, U.S.A.). The English edition is dated 1835; it is still valuable not only for its ability and interest, but also for its carefully drawn syllabus of contents.

The Sermon: Its Construction and Delivery (David J. Burrell). This volume, written by a preacher of some reputation, is evangelistic in tone, comprehensive in treatment, and thoroughly readable; but the student who has read widely in the subject will find little either new or original. It is a good presentation of accepted principles; though a few of its statements need correction.

The student may also consult the undermentioned volumes, all of which are worthy of a place in the homiletical library:

Homiletical and Pastoral Lectures, with a preface by Bishop Ellicott. This volume is the product of many hands. The lectures are not all of equal value; but some topics not usually mentioned are included, e.g. 'The Emotions in Preaching,' the 'Temptations,' 'Responsibilities,' and 'Results' of the Ministry. There is much interesting matter on 'Sermon Preparation.'

Another book of the same type—though smaller—is *Sermon Preparation*, published by Seeley & Co. It is made up of papers by various Anglican writers originally contributed to *The Record*, and contains many useful hints.

Lectures on the Composition and Delivery of Sermons (James Drummond). Terse and readable, though containing little that is new or original.

Preaching (F. E. Carter, M.A.). A readable volume from the Anglican standpoint—not always following the beaten track; and to some extent subordinating the *Preacher* to the *Priest*.

The Ministry of the Word (Canon Newbolt). A study of preaching on its spiritual side by a High Churchman.

A Treatise of Homiletics (Daniel P. Kidder).

Broadus on *The Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*.

Vinet's *Homiletics; or, The Theory of Preaching*. A capital book.

Homiletics and Pastoral Theology (Dr. Shedd).

Thoughts on Preaching (Daniel Moore).

Amongst more recent volumes worthy of note, the following must find a place:

The Cure of Souls (John Watson). Full of interest, as were all the writings of 'Ian Maclaren': and valuable as giving the mature judgement of one of the great preachers of the nineteenth century.

Verbum Dei (R. F. Horton). A book with some excellent points.

Lectures on Preaching (W. Boyd Carpenter, formerly Bishop of Ripon, now Dean of Westminster). Six lectures delivered in the Cambridge Divinity School: able, interesting, and characterized by the author's well-known eloquence.

The Model Preacher (Bishop W. Taylor, of California). Racy, colloquial, earnest talks.

The Ministry of the Word (Dr. W. M. Taylor).

The Preacher and his Place (Dr. D. H. Greer). Modern and readable. In addition to the usual topics, the author discusses such subjects as 'The Preacher and the Past,' 'The Preacher and the Present,' 'The Preacher making the most of himself,' &c.

Preaching and Preachers (Joseph Gowan). This volume covers wider ground than most. The author treats of 'Reading,' 'Originality and Plagiarism,' 'Illustrations,' 'The Character of the Sermon,' 'Adaptation,' 'Analysis,' and 'Popularity.' The book deserves a place in any library aiming at comprehensiveness.

The Ministry to the Congregation (John A. Kern). A useful book. The author discusses first 'The Ministry of Worship,' and, in a fairly exhaustive manner, 'The Ministry of Preaching.' Many of the chapters contain illustrative outlines and paragraphs drawn from modern sermonic literature.

The Work of Preaching (Arthur S. Hoyt). Issued quite recently: well written, interesting, and fairly comprehensive, but not strikingly original.

Sermon and Preacher (W. J. Foxell). Chatty papers on 'The Sermon' and 'The Preacher,' originally contributed to *The Guardian*, *The Church Times*, &c.

What and How to Preach (Alex. Oliver). Some of the topics discussed are fresh and interesting, especially the chapters on 'Variety in the Pulpit,' and 'Speculative Difficulties.'

The Theology of a Preacher (Lynn H. Hough). Insists

on a full-orbed and Christo-centric Gospel. A stimulating volume.

Soul-Saving Preaching (Thomas Cook). Possesses all Mr. Cook's well-known characteristics.

The Art of Preaching in Germany (Lic. D. Friedrich Niebergall). A brief pamphlet written in an unattractive style ; but interesting to the student as showing how preaching is regarded by men of another race.

The Use of the Eyes in Preaching (John Neville). An earnest plea for *extempore* preaching : well worth reading.

These smaller volumes will be helpful chiefly to beginners and young students. Their value must not be measured by their size.

Chapters on Preaching (George Fletcher). A thoughtful and helpful book.

A Manual of Sermon Construction and *Studies in Homiletics* (R. J. Wardell). These are carefully written ; and the latter is one of the text-books of the *Union for Biblical and Homiletic Study.*

The Lay Preacher's Handbook (C. O. Eldridge). Carefully written, and exceedingly useful to the beginner. Was used for some years as a text-book of the *Union for Biblical and Homiletic Study.*

A Manual for Local Preachers (J. A. Clapperton, M.A.). A small book, but exceedingly useful to those beginning to preach.

Practical Lay Preaching (Mr. H. Jeffs).

Talks with Lay Preachers (Dr. R. F. Horton).

The Making of a Sermon (Dr. D. W. Simon).

The Preacher and his Sermon (Dr. J. Paterson Smyth). Readable and sensible lectures.

The Making of a Preacher (D. W. Simon, D.D.). Contains some shrewd common-sense counsels in pithy phrase.

Perhaps the very best material for studying the 'evolution of a great preacher' will be found in the voluminous and instructive Life of Bishop Phillips Brooks. Other useful biographies are those of H. W. Beecher, F. W. Robertson, G. Matheson, and John Watson.

2. Preaching from a Roman Catholic Standpoint.

Bp. Dupanloup's *Ministry of Preaching*. A volume specially worthy of note; it is helpful and highly suggestive, and perhaps all the more useful as coming from a great preacher and prelate of the Roman Church. It deserves and will repay careful study.

The Clergy and the Pulpit (M. L'Abbé Isidore Mullois). Also a small but interesting pamphlet by Arthur Ryan entitled *Some Notes on Popular Preaching*. Worth attention; it is both readable and instructive.

3. History of Preaching.

This introduces a most interesting topic, and one that cannot be neglected by any serious student of preaching. A careful study of the subject will give the preacher not only a high conception of the importance of his task, but also great encouragement in the performance of his duty.

The best introduction to the subject will probably be found in Dr. John Ker's *Lectures on the History of Preaching*, a book at once interesting and instructive. Dr. Ker traces the story of preaching from its ancestry in the Old Testament, through the earliest Christian and Oriental examples, to the Mediaeval period in the Western Church.

This is followed by a series of lectures on Reformation and Post-Reformation preaching in Germany. The work, though published posthumously, is so admirably done as to cause sincere regret that other lectures on French, English, and Scottish preaching were left only in outline, and too incomplete to allow of publication.

Another and later volume of great value is Dr. E. C. Dargan's *History of Preaching*, of which two volumes are now published. Vol. i., a portly tome of nearly 600 pages, deals with preaching and preachers from the time of the Apostles to the middle of the sixteenth century; vol. ii. carries on the study, dealing specially with preaching in *Europe* from 1600–1900 A.D. A third volume is promised on *Preaching in America*. These books are packed with matter, though they deal, perhaps, too much with details and too little with principles. While not such fascinating reading as Dr. Ker's volume, they are essential to the completeness of the preacher's library.

Those who wish to extend their reading in this direction may be reminded of the works of E. Paxton Hood. They are delightful reading, chatty and full of interest, and contain a wealth of information on preachers and their work; and, sometimes, on their mistakes. The titles are well known: *The Lamps of the Temple*; *Lamps, Pitchers, and Trumpets*; *The Throne of Eloquence*; *The Vocation of the Preacher*.

Dr. Lewis O. Brastow, of Yale University, has recently issued two volumes: (1) *The Modern Pulpit*, in which he describes the prominent characteristics of modern preaching in Europe and America, and the influences which, in his judgement, have determined those characteristics; and (2) *Representative Modern Preachers*, a discussion of the

methods and achievements of nine of the most prominent preachers of recent years.

Modern Masters of Pulpit Discourse, by Prof. Wilkinson, of Chicago, is on lines similar to the last-named volume, and, while less masterly in analytical power, is more comprehensive in its range.

G. J. Davies provides two interesting volumes in *Papers on Preaching* and *Successful Preachers*. From these much useful information may be gained. The first, however, does not belong to the historical section.

Some books on special periods demand mention here.

Puritan Preaching in England, by Dr. John Brown. Able and interesting throughout.

The Preachers of Scotland, from the Sixth to the Nineteenth Century (Dr. W. G. Blaikie). 'An interesting and valuable book.'

The Preacher and his Models (Dr. J. Stalker). Forceful, instructive, and helpful for pulpit work.

Mediaeval Preaching (John Mason Neale), and *Post-Mediaeval Preaching* (S. Baring Gould), are both worthy of attention ; as together they form an introduction to a little known but instructive literature.

A History of Lay Preaching in the Christian Church, by John Telford. This volume is the only History of Lay Preaching yet published. It ought to be of great interest to the vast army of lay preachers. It is well written, interesting, and comprehensive.

The writer ventures to add one other item—*Nineteenth-Century Preachers and their Methods*, by John Edwards. A study of the working methods of some of the most eminent preachers of that century, including H. W. Beecher,

Phillips Brooks, Bishop Carpenter, R. W. Dale, Dean Farrar, Thomas Guthrie, John Ker, Alexander Maclaren, Archbishop Magee, Joseph Parker, F. W. Robertson, C. H. Spurgeon, W. L. Watkinson, and Bishop Samuel Wilberforce. There are additional chapters on 'The Ordinary Man,' and 'On Preaching to Children.' The *Spectator* reviewer says: 'May be consulted with much profit.'

4. Rhetoric

Every preacher ought to study the art of speaking, and if he wishes to be really effective as a public speaker, must use the best helps at his disposal for gaining information on the subject. To beginners we heartily recommend Dr. William Mair's admirable volume entitled *Speaking*. It is a book not merely for reading, but for careful study, and is a practical guide to the right use of the vocal organs.

Mr. Nathan Sheppard's *Before an Audience* also gives most excellent advice to the preacher. For further study the following books may be consulted: Mr. G. J. Holyoake's *Public Speaking and Debate*; Mr. O'Connor Power's *The Making of an Orator*; *Rhetoric, its Theory and Practice*, by Dr. Austin Phelps and Dr. A. H. Frink; *The Working Principles of Rhetoric*, by J. F. Genung, or *Pulpit Elocution*, by L. M. Bonkyl. Dr. Storr's *Preaching without Notes* may be commended to all who wish to gain the power of extemporaneous speech.

An interesting volume on this subject comes from a bygone generation. *The Art of Speaking*, translated from the French of Messieurs du Port Royal, 1676.

5. The Art of Illustration

Exposition and Illustration in Teaching (John Adams,

M.A., B.Sc.). Written primarily for teachers; full of wise, practical counsel, and worthy of a place on the preacher's bookshelf.

The Art of Illustration Illustrated (John Edwards). This volume discusses the *Nature*, *Sources*, and *Use* of Illustrations, and gives carefully selected specimens from the sermons of the great preachers of all ages. It has been well received by the reviewers.

The Art of Sermon Illustration (H. Jeffs). A readable and instructive volume, containing some useful counsel and some excellent illustrations.

6. Pastoral Theology

This section of our library is not so closely and definitely connected with pulpit work; but every preacher needs to know something of the subject, and his ministry will be the more effective if he includes it in the list of his studies. We mention a few volumes likely to be helpful.

Vinet's Pastoral Theology; or, The Theory of a Gospel Ministry. A well-known and useful book.

The Public Ministry and Pastoral Methods of our Lord (Dr. W. G. Blaikie). 'Rich both in stimulus and instruction.'

The Christian Minister: his Aims and Methods (James Robertson). Six lectures delivered to Presbyterian students, and based on ministerial experience.

Ministers of the Word and Sacraments, by the Ven. S. M. Taylor; *Pastors and Teachers* (Dr. Knox, Bishop of Manchester). Both volumes contain much that is suggestive; they are written from the Anglican standpoint.

An Introduction to the Study of Pastoral Theology (Clement F. Rogers). Its purpose is to deal with the scientific study

of Pastoral Theology. Such a book is greatly needed; but we do not think the ideal treatise on the subject has yet been written.

The Word and the World: Pastoral Studies for the Modern Preacher (Canon John Wakeford).

Some smaller volumes may be noted. Three by Bishop Winnington Ingram: *Work in Great Cities; Good Shepherds;* and *Messengers, Watchmen, Stewards*, all containing stimulating and helpful counsel. Also *How to be a Pastor*, by Dr. Cuyler; and an excellent little treatise, *Fishers of Men*, by the Rev. J. E. Watts-Ditchfield.

7. Miscellaneous

There are a few other volumes which deserve mention, though for various reasons they are somewhat difficult to classify.

(*a*) For Devotional Reading. Bishop Wilberforce's *Addresses to Candidates for Ordination*; most heart-searching and imperative in its demands on the conscience. William Arthur's *Tongue of Fire*; a first-rate book for Saturday-night reading. Baxter's *Reformed Pastor*; useful for self-examination.

(*b*) In relation to some pressing problems of the day the following will be of service: Dr. Lyman's *Preaching in the New Age.* Dr. G. A. Smith's *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament.* This concedes much to modern critical methods, and should be read with care, but the author is firm in his adherence to the Evangelical standpoint. Dr. J. S. Kennard's *Psychic Power in Preaching* is very suggestive, though not altogether satisfactory as a study of this difficult topic. Dr. H. C. Mabie's *Method in*

Soul-winning; useful to the evangelist. Also *Preacher Problems* (W. T. Moore, D.D.). An attempt to throw light on some present-day difficulties connected with the preacher's task. *The Liberty of Prophesying* (H. Hensley Henson, B.D., D.D.). The author does not follow the usual methods of homiletical writers, but calls attention to some of the difficult and perplexing problems which face the modern preacher. *Absente Reo* (published by Macmillan), provocative of thought, and should be read by every student interested in modern pulpit problems.

(*c*) *Expository Preaching: Plans and Methods* (F. B. Meyer, B.A.). Interesting and instructive, a plea for expository preaching. The author aims at showing the possibility and the use of this method to the ordinary preacher.

Preachers to children will be glad to have their attention called to two short papers by the Rev. R. C. Gillie on *The Art of the Little Sermon* and *The Sermon in the Child*; they will be found in a tiny volume called *Little Sermons to the Children.* Another volume by the same author, *What I said to the Children*, should not be overlooked.

Our list has already run to great length, but it is not exhaustive; there are other volumes in the market, and their omission must not be taken as indicating the compiler's disapproval. Few of our readers will have either the time or the courage to read so extensively in this particular direction, and it is perhaps not necessary they should try to do so; but we can assure them that they will be wise to follow as far as possible the advice of Dr. Dale in this matter, and thus keep ever in mind the importance and dignity of the task to which they have consecrated their powers.